Beginning and Ending

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Beginning and Ending

by LittleUggie

Summary

19 year old Will gets cornered in an alley right before his first heat. Hannibal steps into help him out and decides he wants to keep the young omega. Will eventually comes around, against his better judgement. Let the mutual manipulation and power games begin.

Notes

First Hannibal fic, first time writing A/B/O, first time writing smut. There is no way this won't turn out a hot mess.

It was pointed out to me not long ago that alpha and omega mean beginning and ending, which I knew abstractly but hadn't really thought about. So that's where the title comes from.

See the end of the work for more notes

Meeting

Hannibal found New Orleans an interesting city to hunt in, very different from Baltimore. The odd collections of streets and ever present crowds of people even in the middle of winter presented new challenges to him. However, he was nothing if not adaptable, and it certainly wasn't the first time he had to adjust to new hunting grounds. In fact, he found it a rather refreshing change of pace. Perhaps he would take more guest teaching positions.

He cut through a back alley near the home of a rude grocer who had crushed his bread while bagging last week when an enticing scent hit him. A moment later the sounds of an altercation reached his ears. Moving through the shadows, he rounded the corner to find three thuggish alphas cornering the source of the alluring scent.

The lesser alphas were too distracted posturing to notice the omega reach into his pocket. Hannibal watched, fascinated, as the young man lashed out at the closest attacker, inexpertly slicing his throat and getting caught in the arterial spray. The other two cried out, enraged, one shoving the omega hard into the wall, stunning him and causing him to drop the knife.

On a sudden impulse, Hannibal stepped in, pulling out his handkerchief as he did. He slammed one attacker's head into the wall, then quickly scooped up the dropped knife with the handkerchief and sliced the throat of the last alpha. He then put the knife in the hand of the one with the crushed skull. It all took less than a minute. He then turned to the would-be victim.

Hannibal's breath was briefly taken away by the stunning sight of the beautiful omega before him. Pale skin was splattered with the blood of the attacker he had so righteously slain. His dark curls tousled over wide, piercing blue eyes. Though he was young and lithe, putting to his mind an image of pre-Troy Achilles, his eyes held a world weariness that spoke of an old soul. It was that perceptive gaze that prompted Hannibal to make his second impulsive decision of the night.

He precisely folded his pocket square back, tucking it into his suit and mentally recomposing himself as he addressed the younger man.

"Good evening. If you will forgive my manners for being forward, would you care to join me at a venue better suited for conversation? I wish very much to speak with you."

This disarmed him as Hannibal had intended, leaving the young man blinking at the incongruity of the civil words with the savagery of the situation. The omega visibly gathered himself.

"Lead the way."

Conversation

Chapter Summary

Just some friendly post murder conversation.

Chapter Notes

I'm going to switch between Hannibal and Will's pov each chapter. I had originally meant to have the heat be part of Will's, but this conversation went on a bit longer than I expected.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This was the weirdest night, thought Will as he followed the older alpha into a richly appointed townhouse in the French Quarter. He still wasn't entirely sure how they had gotten to the man's ludicrously expensive car without being stopped. Will was still covered in blood, and apparently smelled like preheat. At least that's how the alphas who accosted him justified their attack. He supposed he should be in hysterics or something right now, but honestly he just felt anger both at his attackers and himself for dropping his pocket knife, and wary curiosity at the alpha who had helped him.

Who he should really not feel so safe around. The way he had coolly dealt with the other alphas indicated that he was no amateur when it came to killing. Logically, Will knew this and he should by all rights be running home as fast as he could and phoning the police. However, his instincts seemed to have convinced his body that this alpha had won him by proving his dominance over lesser alphas. It was all Will could do to stop himself from building a nest and trying to entice the older man to join him in it. He tried to distract himself by examining his surroundings, breaking the silence that had permeated the air between them since they left the alley.

"You don't live here." It wasn't a question. It was obvious to Will, there was an air of impermanence and impersonality to the space, though it was lavishly decorated none of it seemed to exactly fit the strange alpha.

Who took his comment in stride, as he seemed to take everything. "No, I am simply renting this townhouse for a few months while I act as a guest professor at a local university." He ushered Will into the kitchen which seemed slightly more lived in than the rest of the house and pulled out a tall chair at the island for Will who took it, somewhat bemused.

He then began to pull tupperware containers out of the fridge and switched on an electric kettle. Will watched the man's graceful movements. He made heating up leftovers look almost like a performance. Entrancing him so that he jumped in surprise when he was addressed.

"Now that we are a bit more comfortable, we can begin our discussion. I am Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Might I have your name?"

"Uh, Will Graham."

"It is good to meet you. Now, is this upcoming heat your first?"

Well, that was personal. Will felt his face burn with embarrassment.

"Yes."

"A bit of a late bloomer? Likely due to stress and malnutrition from the looks of you. Have you reached your majority yet?"

While Dr. Lecter's diagnosis was undoubtedly true, Will still felt a prickle of resentment at the slight implication that there was something wrong with him.

"I turned 19 last month."

"Have you finished school?"

"I graduated from high school. I've been working since then, trying to save money to go to college." Will waited for Lecter to say that omegas didn't need to go to college since they were just going to raise a family like some of his teachers had told him, but the man just nodded.

"That is an admirable goal. What do you want to study?"

Will just shrugged. He was never good at small talk, and the events of the night were beginning to catch up to him. He felt sore and tired, and just wanted to get to the point so he could go to sleep.

"Why am I here?"

"A question that vexes even the sagest of philosophers, but I believe you are referring more specifically to why you are currently here in my temporary residence with me?"

"Obviously."

"Would you have rather I left you with your, ah, persistent suitors? Though it seemed you rather had the situation in hand."

Will was trying hard not to think about how he had been handling the situation, difficult to do since he could feel the itch of dried blood on his face.

“You could have taken me home, or to the police.”

“I could have, yes. You could have left, also, and not followed me back here. You are just as responsible for your presence as I am, though, I am of course pleased to have you.”

There was something in the way Lecter said ‘have you’ that made Will’s insides clench in anticipation. He tried to get a hold of himself.

“That still doesn’t answer my question. What do you want?”

Hannibal didn’t answer right away, instead sat the prepared food in front of Will. It was some sort of pasta dish, with thin strips of juicy meat artfully arranged on top. The smell rising from it was mouth watering, and abruptly Will was ravenous. He realized he hadn’t eaten anything all day except a cup of noodle that he had scarfed down during his thirty minute lunch break at work hours ago.

“Pasta Siciliano with slow roasted pork and fresh pine nuts. Normally I would pair it with a nice Chianti, but in deference to your age and imminent heat I believe a cup of chamomile will substitute. Please, eat.”

Will did not have to be told twice and dug in. The flavors burst on his tongue, and he had to stop himself from moaning aloud.

“This is amazing.”

Hannibal merely nods at his appreciation and pours himself a cup of tea. He watches Will wolf down the food in silence, only speaking once the plate is mostly cleared.

“Do you have someone waiting at home?”

Will looked down into his own cup, gently blowing on it to stall.

“No, not really. It was just my Dad and me. I moved out when I turned eighteen, and he got a job in another state. We talk on the phone occasionally. But we were never really that close.”

“No one to take care of you.”

“I take care of me,” he bristled.

“Yes, I saw. The sight of you fiercely defending your honor was a glorious thing to behold. But there is more to self care than simply being able to protect yourself. When was the last time you had a good meal and a proper sleep?”

“What does it matter to you? I do just fine on my own.” Will was on the defensive now.

“You asked me what I want. I find myself wanting to take care of you. And before you protest, I’m sure you have the ability to look after yourself, but that doesn’t mean you should have to” Hannibal stated this calmly, eyes carefully watching the face of the younger man who blushed and avoided his gaze.

“What, am I your good deed for the week, Doctor?”

“I rarely concern myself with doing good deeds just for the sake of them, Will.”

Will couldn’t repress a shiver as Hannibal said his name for the first time. Now that his stomach was full, he could feel the other demands of his body growing stronger. By the flare of the doctor’s nostrils, he guessed that the demands were becoming obvious to him, too.

“Had you made any plans for your heat? You had to know it was coming eventually.” He could hardly bear the gentle chiding in the other’s tone, and just shook his head.

Will watched Hannibal watch him from underneath his eyelashes. The older man was studying him like an aficionado would study some peculiar piece of abstract modern art. It wasn’t the worst look he’d had leveled at him, but the intense scrutiny was putting him on edge. He scratched his cheek, dried blood flaking off and getting caught under his nails, reminding him vividly of how his knife had cut through the alpha’s throat. He abruptly felt filthy and wanted to scrub his own skin off.

Hannibal seemed to pick up on his discomfort.

“Why don’t you take a shower while I clean up these few dishes? There are clean towels and a robe in the bathroom.”

“What-” Will could barely bring himself to form the words, but it had to be asked, “What about my heat?”

Hannibal took a deep breath, and Will didn’t miss the way his pupil’s dilated.

“I believe we still have about an hour before it fully arrives. We can discuss how you want to proceed after you bathe.”

Perfectly willing to put off that conversation a little longer, Will let himself be led upstairs through the master bedroom, where he studiously avoided looking at the massive bed, and into the swanky en suite bathroom. He made sure to lock the door after Hannibal left, and managed to actually get under the spray of hot water before he had his meltdown.

Chapter End Notes

Oh yeah, I have a tumblr, that's what I'm suppose to say right?

http://littleuggy.tumblr.com/

The First Heat

Chapter Summary

Will goes into heat. Hannibal helps.

Chapter Notes

Alright, the maiden voyage of the USS Smut.

Also, for anyone who's interested, Hannibal's about 35 in this.

Hannibal knocked softly on the bathroom door. The sounds of the shower had stopped sometime ago, leading him to believe Will was now hiding from him. He had been highly impressed with the young omega, and he planned to be seeing quite a bit more of him. It would be very easy to simply claim him tonight, but that would destroy any chance he might have of building trust with his intended mate.

He had never really given much thought to mating as the concept is somewhat counter productive to his preferred lifestyle, but in Will he saw someone able to stand beside him and truly know him. It would take time, patience, and more than a little coaxing (he could already tell Will is extraordinarily stubborn). But Hannibal relished the thought of guiding Will's Becoming. As much as he anticipated guiding him through his first heat, which was fast approaching. Hannibal smelled his ripening through the door, the scent not unlike the air before a storm.

"Will? Are you going to come out?" He could practically feel the boy's indecision, the hesitation so long Hannibal was about to speak again, when the lock turned and the door cracked open.

The scent of clean, fertile omega billowed out of the steamy room, momentarily stunning Hannibal. Will was still on guard, eyes red rimmed and wary, despite the fact that he was trembling with ill contained desire and kept shooting glances to the large bed behind him.

"I don't want to bond with you." Will braced himself as if he expected Hannibal to throw him down and bite him right there.

"I promise you, Will, I do not make a habit of bonding with people I've just met. But if you'll allow me, I'd like to help you through your heat. I won't even remove my clothing if It

makes you uncomfortable. Or I could run out to a specialty shop and pick you up some heat aids."

"No! No, don't leave." Will reached forward and grabbed the front of Hannibal's shirt, his breath coming in heavy pants. He pressed his face into Hannibal's chest and inhaled deeply.

"Mmmm. Alpha. So strong." The oversized robe he was wearing slipped down, exposing his pale neck and shoulders. Hannibal had to gather his not inconsiderable will power to gently separate them.

"Will, Will, I need you to focus. Can you look at me?" He saw the young man make an effort, shaking his head as if that would help clear it of the hormones running rampant.

"What?"

"Do you want my help?"

"Yeah, yes. Just, I don't want pups. I mean not right now, maybe later, but-"

"I understand, Will. You are not ready for children. That is fine. We won't do anything that might result in children."

"But then how?" Will trailed off, blushing hotly, unable to finish his question. Hannibal smiled at the lovely boy's bashfulness.

"Why don't I show you?" He moved quickly, scooping Will up bridal style, causing him to let out a loud yelp. To apologize for the surprise, he laid the omega gently on the bed, climbing on after him. Hannibal hovered over Will, caging him in, but not touching. His hand drifted to the belt of the robe.

"May I?" Because this had to be Will's decision. Even if his judgement was currently severely compromised.

Will nodded, seeming unable to speak. His flush spread down past his neck, curls wild and slightly damp from the shower. But his eyes were what really drew Hannibal. They were blown wide with fear and arousal, only a thin ring of that electric blue showing. Like an oracle caught in the throws of prophecy.

Swiftly undoing the belt, Hannibal pulled the robe away entirely, tossing it carelessly away. And oh, there he was. His omega, bared and vulnerable. Hannibal almost threw away caution then and there. His every instinct was screaming at him to claim this beautiful creature. To pin him down, mark his throat, knot him, bond him, fill him with pups, and keep him forever.

Will made a keening omegan cry of need, reaching his arms up, and pulling Hannibal head down so he could clumsily kiss him. It was this, strangely enough, that allowed Hannibal to push down his inner alpha. The boy obviously had little, if any, experience but plenty of enthusiasm. He took control of the kiss, softening and deepening it. He licked into the boy's mouth and relished his flavor before pulling back to nuzzle at his throat, licking the scent glands pumping out pheremones.

“No, biting.” It was more of a moan than a command.

“I know, sweet boy, I won’t forget.”

Hannibal sat back, shushing Will who protested and tried to pull him back. Stripping off his shirt and trousers, he crawled back over Will in only his boxer briefs, partially resting his weight on him this time and pinning him to the bedspread, causing him to writhe and try to rub up against him.

“Not yet,” he gently chided and moved so Will couldn’t get any friction. He growled lowly in response, startling a laugh out of the older man.

“Patience, Will.” Hannibal begin to explore every inch of Will’s body, kissing and licking, and even gently biting places that were not his neck. He studiously avoided the places Will wanted him to touch, until over sensitized and desperate, Will shoved his head towards his groin.

“Are you trying to tell me something, mon beau?”

“Stop teasing, I need-please.”

“What is it you need?”

“Touch me.”

“I am touching you.”

“Not enough!”

Hannibal huffed a laugh against his hip, but obligingly trailed his lips closer to the base of Will’s cock. He breathed in the scent of the curls there then pulled the slender organ into his mouth. Will’s back arched off the bed, taught as a bowstring, a litany of babble spilling from his lips, mostly centering around ‘More! Yes! Alpha! Please!’

Hannibal hollowed his cheeks, sucking strongly before pulling off. He pushed Will’s legs up over his shoulders and settled down into the cradle of his body. He spread the boy’s cheeks, exposing his hole, dripping with slick. He was unsurprised to find it a soft pink, the color of a virgin omega who had never taken a knot. It was a shame it had to remain that way during this heat. Next time, he promised himself, as he easily pressed two fingers in, and went back to fellating his intended.

It didn’t take long after that for Will to come, spilling into Hannibal’s skilled mouth. He swallowed every drop, seeming to savor it. Completely wrung out, Will fell into a deep sleep after his intense orgasm, the stress of the night finally catching up to him. He didn’t even notice Hannibal tucking him under the covers, or pulling him close against his body.

Morning After

Chapter Summary

Awkward morning after conversations. Also exposition!

Chapter Notes

I'm more happy with this chapter than I have been with the previous. Of course once I go back and read it, I'll probably hate it.

I've borrowed the courtship steps with some minor modifications from emptycel's sherlock fic The Six Stages of Courtship. Which everyone should go read here: http://archiveofourown.org/works/1538393/chapters/3323132

Thank you guys all so much for your kudos! I've gotten a bigger response on this fic than all my other ones combined. This is what gives me the motivation to keep writing. I hope you continue to enjoy it. Drop a comment if you have any questions or suggestions.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next three days seemed to pass in a dreamlike state. Hannibal kept Will satisfied but never bit or knotted him. He used his hands and mouth to bring him to his peak again and again, but would only rub off against Will when his own need grew unbearable. The expensive bedding was completely ruined by the evidence of their combined desire, which Will would feel bad about in his more lucid moments.

Hannibal kept him well fed, too. Will didn't think he'd eaten so well in his whole life. He must be fixing it whenever Will passed out, because there was always something new when he woke up. It was never anything too heavy, but it was always delicious and fill, fueling them up for the next round. He seemed to enjoy feeding will with his hands, and Will was in a primal enough state of mind to enjoy letting him, though he still got embarrassed when they weren't actively having sex, and had a hard time looking at Hannibal who found his coyness charming.

Will woke up to sunlight streaming in on his fourth morning with Hannibal, taking stock of his body, he concluded that while he was somewhat sore, and still a bit tired, the heat seemed to have passed.

He sat up in the bed, grimacing as who knows what flaked off his body. For once, Hannibal was asleep while Will was awake. The alpha certainly deserved a rest after attending to Will so rigorously. Will desperately wanted a shower and to slink off, but paused recognizing this was probably one of the few times Hannibal had allowed himself to be vulnerable. He certainly didn't look vulnerable despite being in repose. Even in sleep, the power and strength in his muscled body was evident; it was rather like being nestled next to a sleeping tiger. Though judging by the scratches down his back, anyone would think Will was the one with claws.

The sight of the livid red marks stirred something deep within Will that he didn't particularly want to examine, choosing instead to ease out of the bed. Maybe he'd be able to shower and leave before Hannibal awoke. He shooed away his mind's insistence this plan of action was cowardly and his instinct's pressure to curl up on top of Hannibal and purr.

Turns out he couldn't carry out his walk of shame anyway, because he had no idea where his clothes were, and with them his phone and wallet. Lingering outside the bathroom door in nothing but a towel, he debated the merits of waking Hannibal up. That decision was also taken out of his hands when a sleep roughened voice drifted over to him.

"Can I assist you in some way, or were you just enjoying lurking in the doorway?"

"Um, where are my clothes? And phone." *And dignity*, he added silently.

Hannibal drew himself out of bed and stretched in one smooth movement, unconcerned with his current state. Not that he had anything to be ashamed of, but did he have to be so comfortable in his own skin? Will looked away from the exposed expanse that he'd been only too happy to run his hands over a few hours ago.

"I took the liberty of putting your clothing through the wash and plugging in your phone. I hope you will forgive me, but I also responded to a call from what I assume was your place of employment explaining that you were indisposed and unable to come in for a few days."

Oh shit, Will had completely forgotten about his job at the library. He really hoped he wasn't fired. His supervisor was an omega, so surely she'd be understanding about it, right? There was some serious grovelling in his future. Hannibal interrupted his internal panic.

"If you don't mind waiting a few moments, I will rinse off and fix us some breakfast." He offered the same robe from before. Will automatically accepted it, unable to form a reply before the alpha disappeared into the bathroom.

Maybe he could grab his stuff and leave? His stomach reminded him that Hannibal's food was far preferable to whatever bag of grease he'd inevitably grab on his way home. Now that he thought about it, he wasn't entirely sure how far away this house was from his dingy apartment. Normally he didn't mind walking, but the thought exhausted him at the moment. He really couldn't afford a cab. He figured Hannibal would offer to drive him home and honestly he'd probably take him up on the offer. It wasn't like he needed to protect his pride after everything he'd done with the alpha.

He found his way to the laundry room, where his clothing lay folded on an ironing board with his wallet on top. Had Hannibal ironed his cheap jeans and t-shirt? He got dressed and went to the kitchen. After examining the overly complicated coffee machine, he decided to simply wait at the island where he had sat the first night. Just a few moments passed before Hannibal joined him, hair damp and slicked back, wearing a dark red sweater and black slacks. Will guessed that must be what passed as lounge wear for the man.

Unsure what the appropriate response was to what had to be the strangest morning after in history, Will just sat in fidgeting, occasionally opening his mouth to say something but changing his mind.

For his part, Hannibal didn't seem to mind his awkwardness as he went about preparing french toast, sausage, and hand squeezed orange juice. He easily navigated the controls on the coffee machine, and presented a cup to Will, who took it, grateful to have something to occupy his hands.

"Normally, I eat at the dining room table, but I think the intimacy of the kitchen will work well for the continuation of our conversation."

"Continuation?" Will watched him turn the fat sausage links in the pan. They sizzled and filled the room with a wonderful spicy scent.

"Yes, before we were interrupted by your heat, we were discussing how I wanted to take care of you."

Will shifted uncomfortably, and didn't respond while Hannibal sat two full plates and a pitcher of orange juice on the bar. He cut into the steaming french toast, dripping with real maple syrup and took a bite.

He swallowed the bite, licking sweetened butter off his lips. "You've done more than enough."

"And yet I find myself wanting to do more." Hannibal cut precisely into one of the sausages, and brought it to his mouth, closing his eyes in enjoyment of the flavor. *Geez, even eating is a performance with this guy*, Will thought.

"That's probably just hormones and instinct talking. Give it a few days and you'll forget all about me."

"I highly doubt that. You are decidedly unforgettable, Will." Hannibal quirked his lips. Will wouldn't call the expression a smile, exactly. More of a not-smile. He was unsure what it meant. Will knew he was good at reading people. An empathy disorder one of his various counselors had called it. If only being able to read people translated into knowing how to act around them. But he wasn't picking up much from Hannibal. *Reduced affect*, he thought. Perhaps he wasn't the only one with a disorder. His musing would have to wait, Hannibal was still talking.

"As for hormones and instincts, I have no doubt that they are playing no small part in drawing us together, but they are not responsible for my desire to care for you. As you know

first hand, not all alphas feel compelled to protect omegas."

The subtle reminder of their initial meeting caused a tight ball to form in the pit of his stomach. He sat down his fork, feeling sick.

"Those men, have they found them yet?"

Hannibal observed him carefully. "There was a short article about it in the local paper yesterday, it has been ruled as a dominance fight with one killing the other two before succumbing to his own injuries."

"Oh," He shouldn't be relieved. He should feel guilty. Those alphas were dead because of him, but he couldn't dredge up any remorse for the brutal end of the men who would have raped him. Mostly he just felt bad because he knew he should feel bad and didn't.

"Do not waste your thoughts on them." He looked up, startled enough to meet Hannibal's eyes. "They were nothing but pigs." Will felt as if he was falling into the darkness of those eyes. He remembered how easily Hannibal had killed two of them, so at odds with the considerate man who had attended to him the past three days.

"Who are you?" Will whispered, regretting the words as soon as they slipped out. He sensed that it was a dangerous question to ask.

Hannibal smiled his not-smile again. "I would like to show you."

Then he broke eye contact, turning his attention back to his breakfast and lightening his tone as if the strangely intense moment had not happened.

"Which is why I'm going to court you." He stated matter of fact.

It was lucky Will had not resumed eating yet, otherwise he would have choked. "What?"

"I realize due to our unorthodox introduction that it won't proceed quite traditionally, but I don't consider myself much of a traditionalist when it comes to alpha and omega relationships. I don't think you do either, hmm?" The awful man continued, ignoring Will's gaping.

"You really don't want to court me. You don't even know me, believe me once you do you won't want anything to do with me."

"That's a rather negative thing to say about yourself." Hannibal gazed at him inquisitively across the island. "Why shouldn't I want to court you? You have proven yourself intelligent and brave, and I find you quite attractive. I believe we are extremely compatible. Going through the formal courting process will allow us to get to know each other better which will create a stronger bond if we choose to form one. We have already unofficially progressed through the first two stages and you are currently saturated in my scent, though that will likely fade within the next twelve hours without reinforcement."

"Two stages?" Will's head was spinning with Hannibal's explanation, as he picked up his fork and continued eating.

“Do they not teach the six recognized steps of alpha and omega courtship in the schools here? The state of sexual education in this country is abysmal.”

“I won’t argue that with you. My health teacher pushed abstinence only and told us that once we were married to just do whatever our alphas told us to do.”

Hannibal tsked in disapproval. “Well, allow me to make up for the deficit of the public school system. Behavioral and anatomical experts have isolated six distinct steps of alpha and omega courtship behavior. While the ceremonial aspects of courtship vary from culture to culture, they all have their basis in these six steps which are: Sustain, Protect, Shelter, Scent, Mark, and Bond. The order of the first three can vary to some extent, and scenting can technically happen anytime, but the strongest and most successful bonds in general follow this order.”

“I know what scenting, marking, and bonding are, but what do the first three entail?”

“When potential mates come into contact with each other, they will gravitate toward this behavior, often subconsciously as it is ingrained in us both socially and genetically. The alpha will offer the omega sustenance, food or drink, proving that they are able to provide for a mate. If the omega accepts the food, it is a tacit agreement that they are accepting the alpha’s suit.” Hannibal looked meaningfully at Will’s now empty plate.

Will stammered, “I, uh, didn’t-”

“As I said, it is often subconscious. Besides, I enjoy cooking for all my guests, not just potential mates.”

Will’s face still felt hot. “Protect is the next one?” he said to get Hannibal back on track.

“Yes, the alpha proves in some way that they are capable of protecting the omega. This can take many forms. In the early histories of many east European countries, the prospective alphas would trap a wild animal to fight to prove their superiority as a protector. The pelt would then be given to their favored omega, often to be made into a garment to wear on their bonding night.”

“I guess you stopping those two alphas counts as that step?”

“Yes, it fulfilled that role. I didn’t think a suit made from their skin would favor your complexion.” Will’s eyes widened, and he horrified himself by laughing aloud at Hannibal’s completely inappropriate joke.

“Once the alpha proves they can serve as protection, the omega will offer comfort or shelter to the alpha. Again, what this is varies depending on culture as well as the individual couples. The comfort can be physical or emotional. Or it can be literal shelter, with the omega welcoming the alpha into their den. For displays as I previously mentioned, this step often took the form of the omegas patching up the wounds sustained during their battle.”

Well, this was a relief. Will wasn’t exactly a comforting person, it should be easy enough to keep from inviting Hannibal into his apartment.

“If the shelter is accepted, the courtship is usually seen as monogamous. The alpha will cease claims on any other omegas, and the omegas will refuse any gestures of courtship from other alphas. From there, the alpha will frequently scent the omega to warn off any rivals, the courtship can still be ended at this point but it is considered a significant commitment. When the couple is ready to bond, the omega will present to the alpha- ah.”

Will isn’t sure what sort of face he made but it was bad enough that Hannibal cut his lecture off abruptly to explain.

“I’m aware that modern media tends to use the term presenting as a reference to a sexual position in alpha and omega relationships. This is incorrect usage, confusing the origin of the word with the most effective posture for conception for omegas. The actual definition simply refers to the omega presenting their neck for marking to the alpha. If the alpha accepts, they will mark the omega’s neck above their scent glands, which ends the process of courting and begins the process of bonding.”

“From what I’ve heard bonding tends to go a lot quicker.”

Hannibal nodded in acknowledgement. “There have been couples who have completed the courtship process in a manner of days, but typically, yes, courtship is a more drawn out process whereas bonding will take only several hours. Though, I am told that bonds can strengthen significantly over time. But that is the point of courtship, for the couple to figure out if they should bond.”

“I don’t want to bond.” Will stated firmly.

“Not right now, no. As you stated we don’t know each other very well. We were thrust together by circumstance. But never? Are you not even willing to consider the idea of courtship? God forbid we become friendly.”

Will scrubbed his hands over his face, then through his curls, making them even wilder.

“Maybe I don’t find you that interesting.” It was a lie, he’d never met anyone as interesting as Hannibal, and judging by the smirk on the other man’s face, he knew it.

“You will,” he promised.

Will tried to come up with some other excuse to deter the man, but eventually capitulated, frustrated at knowing he was playing right into the alpha's hands.

“Alright, you can...court me. But don’t say I didn’t warn you. I’m not a very easy person to get along with.”

There was plenty of time for either of them to back out of it. Once Hannibal got to know him and saw he wasn’t a docile little baby maker, he’d leave him alone and go find some rich pedigreed omega to chase. Will told himself this as Hannibal drove him home, but even in his head it sounded unconvincing. In fact, he had the uneasy premonition that his fate had been set the moment Hannibal laid eyes on him.

Chapter End Notes

Also, tumblr is a thing. I have a blog there. http://littleuggy.tumblr.com/

Courting

Chapter Summary

Cannibal went a-courtin' and he did ride uh huh.

Chapter Notes

Over 100 kudos! Y'all are too good to me.

I've been to Louisiana before, but not New Orleans. According to my research, that place looks frickin awesome.

A week after Will's heat, enough time to allow the omega time to let his guard down, Hannibal showed up with coffee and bagels to drive Will to work. A few days observations and a friendly chat with some of his coworkers allowed him to determine Will's schedule and how Hannibal could best fit into it. When Will protested, he calmly explained that the library was on the way to the university he was teaching at, and it was no trouble at all to take him. Will dodged him once his shift was over, taking the bus instead. Hannibal did not comment on his obvious evasion the next day, simply wishing him a good morning and handing over a to go cup of coffee and a savory muffin.

The alpha was aghast when he found out about Will's habit of eating instant noodles and began packing him a sack lunch. Will hesitated only momentarily over this, clearly remembering the first step but finding the lure of Hannibal's cooking far more preferable to a cup of msg.

During these morning drives, Hannibal attempted to make conversation, usually receiving grunts or one word answers in reply before they arrived at their destination and the skittish omega escaped the Bentley. Six days into this routine, Hannibal stopped Will before he could get out.

"As the library is closed on Sundays, can I take that to mean you have the day off?" Will nodded, jaw set as he if he already guessed Hannibal's intention and was preparing to reject him.

"I've not gotten much of a chance to take in much of the city since I've been here. I was hoping you might be willing to join me in visiting some of the notable destinations and offer a native's insight."

Will's brow furrowed. Apparently this was a bit different than what he was expecting.

"I've not actually lived here that long, and I've never really done the tourist thing."

"Well, then we can explore together then." Hannibal encouraged. Will still looked like he wanted to turn down the offer, but didn't want to get into an argument about it before work.

"Alright, I guess," he grumbled.

"I will pick you up at the usual time tomorrow?" Will nodded unenthusiastically and slammed the car door with a little more force than necessary. Hannibal thoughtfully watched him stomp to the front door before turning the car back toward the townhouse. He had some papers to grade since he would be otherwise occupied on Sunday.

The next morning, carrying on one arm a bag with breakfast and a gift, Hannibal knocked on Will's door in the disreputable apartment complex. The best that could be said for the place was that it was ground level and provided four locks on the doors. When Hannibal had first seen it, he itched to snatch Will away then and there and install him in an appropriate residence, preferably Hannibal's own. But he knew that the boy would not appreciate the gesture so soon.

After hearing some shuffling around, Will answered the door wearing jeans that barely seemed to be holding together and a faded graphic t-shirt. The sleepy scowl he wore morphed into an expression of surprise when presented with Hannibal's present.

"Is this an aloe plant?" He accepted the small brown pot with a few green shoots springing up out of it with an air of bemusement.

"Aloe Vera is quite versatile and useful. It can be used medicinally to treat burns and other skin afflictions, or it can be cooked and incorporated into a number of dishes. It's also very low maintenance and can flourish even in some of the harshest environments. I thought you might appreciate it more than a bouquet of hothouse flowers that will wither in a few days."

"Yeah. That's...that's really thoughtful. Thank you." Hannibal could almost hear Will's inner debate about whether inviting him in constituted offering shelter. He decided to make it a bit easier on the boy.

"I also brought a protein scramble to give us some energy for the day ahead."

Reluctantly, Will opened the door a bit wider. "Alright. Come on in."

Will's apartment was cramped and sparsely furnished. The combined living room and kitchenette boasted a sagging loveseat next to a low coffee table stacked with books and a formica table with two chairs that had white scars where the plasticine upholstery had cracked. Will pulled plastic plates and cups out of the dish drainer next to the sink. He sat the aloe plant in the center of the table.

Hannibal refrained from commenting and began pulling out tupperware dishes. He indicated that Will should serve himself, and watched the boy take a bite before he started in on his

own meal. The silence was not quite as awkward as their previous car rides, but having the alpha in his home was obviously making Will extra tense. He eventually broke.

“So where are we going today?”

“I thought we might take a walk around Jackson Square, if you are amiable. I understand that it is designed after the Place des Vosges which I visited many times when I lived in Paris.”

“Oh. That sounds alright. It’s the offseason so it shouldn’t be too crowded. It’ll be a mad house later this month though for mardi gras.”

“We shall have to plan to take cover during the festivities.” Hannibal’s conspiratorial expression was lighthearted. Will fidgeted, seeming to want to ask something but appearing to change his mind several times.

“Are, you, um. I mean, where are you from, originally? I don’t recognize your accent.” The poor boy looked ready to melt into the linoleum.

“That is likely because it is a bit of a mix. I am originally, as you say, from Lithuania but moved away relatively young to live in France. I attended university in Florence, Italy before immigrating to the United States. My current home is in Baltimore.”

“Oh.” Will didn’t say anything more, pushing the remains of his breakfast around his plate.

“If there is anything else you’d like to know, please feel free to ask, Will. We are, after all, trying to get to know each other.”

Will nodded, but kept quiet, reaching over to gently touch the sprouts of the aloe. It was a bright spot of green against the drab yellowed wallpaper.

Hannibal repressed a sigh and took the dishes to the sink, rolling up his shirt sleeves with a few practiced movements.

“You don’t have to do that. I mean, you brought the food.”

“I don’t mind, and besides it will only take a moment.” Will seemed unsure what to do, lingering beside Hannibal. After he sat the first plate in the drainer, Will grabbed a dish towel to dry, relaxing minutely once he had a task to focus on. As stated, it only took a moment to wash everything. Hannibal smiled at Will, pleased at sharing the small domestic chore. He took the dish towel and dried his hands, before gesturing toward the door.

“Shall we go then?”

Jackson Square was far more crowded than Will had predicted. Many people apparently wanted to get a jump on their mardi gras celebration, there were more than a few masked and beaded faces in the crowd even though Festival was almost three weeks away. Hannibal was not going to complain, though, as it caused Will to walk closer to his side than he ordinarily might. Hannibal risked putting a hand on the boy’s lower back in order to better guide him. They wandered over to a line of artists with their work displayed along a spired fence. Will paused to study a watercolor of the bayou at sunset.

“Do you paint?” Hannibal asked.

Will shook his head decisively. “Never really had the time to learn. I’m okay with my hands, though. My dad taught me how to make fishing lures and work on motors. Sometimes I whittle, but I, um, lost my pocket knife.”

Hannibal knew exactly how he had lost his pocket knife. “I hope it didn’t have sentimental value.”

“Nah, I’d just found it somewhere, don’t even remember where. Do you paint?”

“Very rarely. I prefer pencil and paper. Perhaps I can show you my etchings one day.” The innuendo flew right over Will’s curls as he simply nodded and continued walking.

The day went by rather quickly, Will eventually relaxed a bit and seemed to be enjoying himself, becoming a bit more open, responding to Hannibal’s questions and asking his own. They got lunch from a street vendor, and Will seemed overly delighted to watch Hannibal try a po’ boy. Eventually sinking sun painted the sky pink, and Hannibal suggested they retire to his residence for the evening. Will looked a bit suspicious, but agreed.

As they made their way back to the car, a man with a cap pulled down low over his face bumped hard into Will’s shoulder, almost knocking him down. He would have moved quickly on without stopping, had Hannibal not reached out and snagged the back of his shirt, slamming the man up against the wall of a building with his arm across his throat.

“I believe you just took something that belongs to my companion.” Hannibal said conversationally.

“Hey, psycho, I don’t know what your tal-” The man’s response was choked off as Hannibal pressed down.

“Allow me to jog your memory. His wallet, which is now in your coat pocket. Kindly return it to him.”

The man’s face was turning an interesting color. He scrambled in his coat pocket and three wallets fell out. Sure enough, one of them was Will’s. Hannibal eased up on his throat.

“Now, please apologize. You were very rude to my friend.”

“I’m sorry. Christ, I’m sorry. Please let me go.” Hannibal let him down and the man took off, pushing through the small crowd that had gathered during the short exchange.

“My apologizes, Will. I hope this hasn’t spoiled your day.”

“No, it, it wasn’t your fault. I didn’t even notice he took my wallet. Thank you. For getting it back I mean. It would have sucked getting everything replaced. Though I get the feeling we might end up on youtube tonight.”

Hannibal glanced around. There were several people with their phones out.

“Let’s not give them any more carnage to peck over then.” He offered his arm to Will, who surprisingly took it, and they hurried on.

Hannibal set a strict pattern over the next few months, designed to provide Will with a sense of routine and familiarity. It also served to give him the control of their interactions. He continued to drive Will to work and after a while Will consented to being driven home, too, especially once storm season began. On Sundays, Hannibal would show up with a gift, something small and useful. The week following their first outing, he presented Will an antler handled pocket knife with a wickedly sharp blade.

‘I hope you manage to hang onto this one’ was written on a gift tag and attached to the knife. Will wasn’t amused.

They visited many different places all over the city and occasionally venturing outside of it, patronizing museums, parks, historical sites. Will particularly enjoyed their trip to the zoo, though he confessed to Hannibal that it was saddening to see wild creatures locked up. Hannibal had to agree there was something wrong about caging predators and denying them the freedom to hunt. They ended their days at Hannibal’s townhouse where he cooked for Will, sometimes crafting lavish and exotic feasts and sometimes serving simple, comforting food. Often they would linger over dessert, but Hannibal always returned him to his small, awful apartment afterwards with no more than a chaste kiss at the door.

Hannibal could see Will’s defenses slowly lowering as they grew more familiar. They challenged each other in a verbal repartee. Hannibal was constantly impressed and fascinated by Will’s analysis of the people that they came across on their excursions and found him a most engaging conversation partner. Watching the young man become animated with passion as he explained some point reinforced Hannibal’s desire to bond with the omega. He would occasionally catch Will’s eyes lingering on his body before the boy would flush and turn away. His intended just needed a little push before he accepted Hannibal as his mate. A push that needed to be engineered soon as his time in the city was rapidly dwindling, and Hannibal had no intention of returning to Baltimore without Will as his mate.

The Tipping Point

Chapter Summary

A small push off a high cliff.

Chapter Notes

I put off writing this all day and it turned into a monster. At the moment I'm aiming for around 22 chapters. We'll see how it turns out, but basically we still have a long way to go my friends.

Incidentally, I don't know if New Orleans has storm sirens, I'm just assuming they do.

Thanks to everyone who left kudos and/or comments! Y'all are the ones that keep me writing. You get rewarded with smut pt 2!

Will knew that the balancing act that was his and Hannibal's carefully constructed relationship would eventually reach a tipping point. They could not continue to interact in a perpetual state of sly flirting and unresolved tension. He would admit he had grown fond of the man over the course of their courtship. Hannibal never talked down to him or made him feel inadequate despite the disparity in age, education level, and economic class. In fact, Will found himself continually surprised by how well they seemed to fit together. While an outsider may have only seen the superficial differences between the two, they actually had rather similar personalities. They were both rather solitary and private people, when it came down to it. They just had different types of armor that they used to keep others at a distance. Will with his prickly reclusive tendencies and Hannibal with his well crafted theatricality. Admittedly, Hannibal's made for easier social interaction. In the quiet, lonely moments while Will lay in his lumpy twin bed unable to sleep, he imagined what it would be like to bond with Hannibal. To be able to stand beside him as an equal and call him his mate. To build a life together, maybe have children. The thoughts made his inner omega cry piteously with want and longing. But still he held back.

Because of the issue that they were both still dancing around. The elephant in the room of how they met. If Will watched carefully, he caught small glimpses of that darkness in Hannibal. Such minuscule slips that he doubted anyone else could pick up on it. Carefully worded comments about unpleasant people they've encountered, the expert and almost loving way he handled his kitchen knives, the tilt to his lips when they discussed God and morality. Even he wouldn't have recognized the subtle hints for what they were had he not already known what Hannibal was capable of. More than anything else, this is what motivated him to

keep the alpha at arm's length. Not because he was afraid Hannibal was going to hurt him. He was fairly certain he wouldn't, at least as long as Will didn't threaten him. No, Will was more afraid of his own attraction to that darkness and what bonding with Hannibal would awaken in him. He really should have ceased contact with the alpha long ago. Will could blame his biology for compelling him, but truthfully he knew that he simply liked spending time with the older man. He hadn't noticed how lonely he had been before they met, not going anywhere besides work and the store, spending his nights in his sorry apartment reading for escape. He couldn't bring himself to return to that empty life having now known Hannibal.

So he was not as surprised as he should have been when things finally came to ahead in late April. It all felt rather inevitable, really.

Hannibal was almost thirty minutes late to pick him up. Will had sent him a few texts that had gone unresponded. He normally would have just taken the bus or walked, but there was torrential rain pouring from the sky, interspersed with cracks of lightning and booms of thunder. He was just about to resign himself to an unpleasant walk when the headlights of the Bentley cut through the storm.

"I'm very sorry for keeping you waiting, Will. I got caught in a meeting and my phone died so I couldn't call you."

"It's fine, I'm just glad you made it. I don't think this nasty weather is going to let up anytime soon."

They were almost to Will's apartment when the eerie wail of storm sirens filled the air, causing Will's hair to stand on end.

"Are we under attack?" Hannibal did not look particularly alarmed by the prospect.

"Only by mother nature. It means the weather is about to get even worse and that we should take cover." Will reached over and clicked on the radio, tuning it to the closest station. Sure enough, an automated emergency alert was running, informing them they were under a tornado warning for the next six hours and to seek shelter immediately.

"I think you might have to spend the night at my apartment. I don't feel good about you driving anywhere else in this."

"If you insist." Will shot Hannibal a look as they pulled up to his door, but the man's face remained carefully blank. Perhaps he was being paranoid, there was no way Hannibal could have manipulated the weather in a ploy to get Will to offer him shelter.

"This doesn't mean anything." he warned the man, hand on the car door.

"Of course not."

"I would have offered to anyone."

"It is the polite thing to do."

“Just so we’re clear.”

Hannibal nodded regally, and Will hopped out of the car, dashing to the front door with his hood pulled up against the rain. Hannibal had learned quickly that Will wasn’t one to wait around to have doors opened for him, though the man made a valiant effort. By the time Will got all the locks undone they were both soaked to the skin.

Will grabbed all three of his towels, grateful that he’d done laundry the previous day. He offered two to Hannibal.

“I bet that suit can’t go in the dryer, huh?”

“Indeed not.” He could tell Hannibal was trying not grimace at the thought, the pretentious jerk. Will was going to enjoy this next part.

“Well, you can hang it up in the bathroom. I’ve got some clothes that’ll probably fit.” It wasn’t difficult to find some elastic waist sweatpants and one of his dad’s old flannel shirts. Will had a tendency to wear clothes several sizes too big anyway. He treasured the look on Hannibal’s face when he handed them over, having gone ahead and put on dry things himself.

“You don’t have to look so pleased,” Hannibal complained after changing.

“Hold still, I need to take some pictures of this.” Hannibal huffed, but obligingly held still as Will took several shots on his phone. He made one his background.

“I hope you remember this moment when I get the opportunity to dress you up.” Hannibal said as he sat down on the loveseat. It suddenly struck Will that Hannibal was really here, in his home, where he would be staying all night, and Will only had a twin bed. He wasn’t sure whether he should start hyperventilating or ask Hannibal if he wanted to test the sturdiness of the box springs. He went with the in between option of staring like an idiot and breathing heavy.

“Will, are you alright?” Hannibal looked concerned.

“Yes! Fine! I’m...going to go start dinner. Because eating is a thing that people do.”

“It is necessary for survival, yes.” The terrible man was laughing at him and didn’t even have the decency to do it out loud.

“Such a shame we never developed the ability to photosynthesize.” Will stalked over to the refrigerator. He would have yanked it open, but didn’t want to accidentally pull the handle off. That wouldn’t earn his security deposit back.

“Now I wouldn’t say that. The act of consumption is one of life’s greatest pleasures.” Hannibal’s accented voice was a smooth dark rumble.

“Depends on what you’re consuming, as you’re going to find out tonight. I’ve not got much to choose from either in the ingredient or skill department.”

“I’m sure we can figure out something, Hannibal paused. “You don’t just have those terrible dehydrated cups do you?” For the first time since they’d met, Will heard the man sound genuinely worried.

“I’m not that hopeless. I just took those for lunch because they’re quick and cheap. I certainly haven’t been missing them.”

There was a bag of white rice in the cupboard. He had part of a bag of frozen mixed vegetables, and a few pieces of fried pork chops that Hannibal had sent home with him after their last meal together.

“Looks like we’re having stir fry.”

“Is there anything I can do to help?” Will tried not to jump out of his skin. He hadn’t noticed the alpha come right up behind him.

“No, there really isn’t that much to it. Do...I mean, can I get you something to drink? I have some sweet tea.”

“Is this the infamous Southern Style Sweet Tea that was apparently conceived of as an excuse to drink a gallon of sugar over ice?”

“I don’t make mine quite that sweet. Here.” Will pulled a plastic pitcher out of the fridge half full of dark liquid with a few lemon wheels floating on top. He poured Hannibal a cup.

“If you don’t like it, you don’t have to drink it. I’ve got milk or water or...Well, I guess just that. Or you could make hot tea, I’ve still got some bags.”

“No, this is fine. It is just a bit odd to drink tea cold, but it is not unpleasant.” Will couldn’t tell if he was lying or not, but decided to let it go. The man had professed to having an adventurous palate after all.

They ate the filling, if uninspired, meal and Hannibal insisted on cleaning up the few dishes. Will dried as he had the morning of their first outing. *Our first date* , Will thought to himself, *if I’m going to be honest* .

Will wasn’t sure what to do with himself once the dishes were done. Hannibal wandered back to the love seat and was examining some of the books stacked up on the coffee table, seeming perfectly at ease. Will hovered like a neurotic moth over a light.

“You have an eclectic selection here.” Hannibal said, moving a copy of Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* off of H. G. Well’s *The Invisible Man* .

“I’m an eclectic kind of person, I guess.”

“Not the worst kind of person to be. It means you are open to all life has to offer, or at least are willing to consider it. A pity more people don’t share that sentiment.” Hannibal reached a hand out to Will. “Will you sit with me?”

Will approached him cautiously, not taking his hand, but easing slowly down onto the loveseat beside him. He scrunched himself up against the arm opposite Hannibal, but he could still feel the other man's body heat all along his side. The outside of their thighs pressed together, making his heart speed up. He was overly aware of the alpha's spicy natural smell enhanced by his cologne. It made him want to shift closer and bury his nose at the base of his throat. He realized that Hannibal had asked him something.

"What?" God he hoped that didn't come out too breathy. Hannibal was watching him from under hooded eyes. Then deliberately, he stretched one arm out, wrapping it around Will's shoulders and pulling him against his body.

Will definitely did *not* moan at the sensation of being held close for the first time since the beginning of their relationship, but a soft purr may have slipped out when he began to run his fingers through Will's curls. They stayed like that for a long time, listening to the wind and rain outside, breathing each other in, shifting only slightly to a more comfortable position. Hannibal stretched out as much as the small space allowed, with Will draped over him, cradled against his body. Will may have dozed, lulled by the rain and soothing fingers. Distantly, he was aware that they had reached the fourth phase of their courtship. The one described as 'a significant commitment'. The phrase didn't alarm him as it should have. In truth, he was tired of fighting his attraction, and it felt so good to lie with Hannibal like this. Why shouldn't he be able to have this all the time? And more besides, he hadn't forgotten how the alpha had taken care of him during his heat. There were more than a few nights that he explored himself while recalling those three days. And lately it was getting more and more difficult to turn away from Hannibal after they'd spent the day together. The man had treated him with the utmost respect, never pressuring him physically. Even when Will would have welcomed a little pressure.

Will licked his lips. *Could* he ask for more? He had gone to the health clinic a few days after his heat. They wouldn't put him on suppressants stating he needed to have at least a year of consistent heats in order to make sure there were no health risks. But he had gotten a prescription for birth control. He knew he'd gotten very lucky with Hannibal who had respected his wish not to have pups yet even during the middle of his heat, but it was not a risk he wanted to take again.

"Hannibal?" He murmured against his chest.

"Yes?" The alpha's voice was equally hushed.

"Do you want to go to bed with me?"

Hannibal's hand tightened minutely against the back of Will's head and he let out a shuddering breath before sitting up, dislodging the younger man. He turned toward him, taking Will's face in his hands, and gently encouraging him to meet his eyes.

"Believe me when I say there is nothing I would like more in this moment than to take you to bed, but I think there are some things we need to discuss before we take that step, Will."

Oh god, Hannibal was going to make them have The Talk. Will knew it was coming, had dreaded it, and it was just as bad as he had feared. Worse, he felt completely defenseless. He

had thought he would at least be able to put up a token fight, but at the moment he felt that he'd helplessly agree to anything Hannibal asked of him. Will closed his eyes so he didn't have to bear the intensity of his gaze.

"Do you know when your next heat should be?"

"A week or so. You know that, you were there for the last one."

"I just wanted to make sure you knew. Do you have plans for this one?"

"I...I went on the pill. I want to have it with you." He felt Hannibal press a kiss to his forehead.

"Sweet boy. I would be honored to share it with you. I have been struggling how to tell you this, though. I have to return to Baltimore at the beginning of next month."

That made Will's eyes fly open in a flash of blue. Hannibal laid a finger over his mouth before he could say a word.

"My teaching position here was only temporary, you know this. The semester is ending, and the lease I made on the townhouse will expire. I cannot stay in this city indefinitely, it is not my home." He stroked Will's cheek with his thumb, eyes roving over his face as if to memorize it.

"I never even conceived I might ever find someone like you. I can never entirely predict what you will do and I find myself completely enraptured. I want to know everything about you and see the world from your perspective, but more than anything else I want you to be mine. To have and hold, as the saying goes. I want to mark your throat so everyone you encounter will know that you are taken. I want to bond with you so that even when we are not together, I will be able to feel your presence."

Hannibal slid off the couch, kneeling on the floor before Will, taking both his hands. Tears trembling from Will's eyes. He could only clutch tightly at Hannibal's hands, they seemed the only solid thing in the whole world.

"William Graham. Will you come home with me? Will you be my bond mate?"

Will couldn't speak. He tried, but the words wouldn't come. Instead, he did the only thing that felt right. He tilted his head back, presenting his neck to Hannibal.

"Mylimasis." Hannibal fairly growled the word before crushing Will to him, nuzzling over his bared throat. Will gasped as Hannibal picked him up, but wound his arms and legs around the alpha.

My alpha , he thought dizzily.

Hannibal carried him to the bedroom, tumbling them onto his embarrassingly unmade bed. It was hard to care about that though with Hannibal still worrying his neck.

“Once I mark you, you’ll go into an abbreviated heat. I will need to knot you during that time in order for the bond to take effect.”

“I know how bonding works.” Will was squirming now, he could feel his slick already beginning to trickle.

“I just want you to be prepared.”

“I’m not going to *get* prepared unless you actually bite me!”

“Well, then.” Hannibal grabbed a fistful of curls pulling his head back and bit hard right above his scent glands, breaking through the skin with no hesitation.

Will wanted to scream. It hurt like hell, but he could only clutch at Hannibal’s shoulders, gasping. Hannibal held him close, cradling his head and licking at the wound, imparting his alpha enzymes that would trigger the omega’s heat and create a scar.

The pain faded fairly quickly, and Will could feel the heat rushing upon him. It wasn’t like last time. Last time had been like sitting in a bathtub slowly filling up with water, the heat slowly creeping up on you. This one felt like being under the shadow of a looming tidal wave right before it hit. Nothing but the knowledge you are about to be hit by everything.

“Clothes, off, now.” He tugged at the flannel shirt Hannibal was still wearing *for some goddamn reason* . Hannibal laughed, a truly joyous sound.

“At last I see the appeal of these garments.” He quickly tossed them aside. “They are so easy to remove.” Will didn’t answer, because he was too busy struggling out of his own shirt. He threw it to the floor, and Hannibal grabbed his hips, sliding his pants and boxers down in one quick movement.

Then Hannibal was pressing him into the mattress, which could barely contain the two of them. Will kissed him feverishly, tasting his own blood in Hannibal’s mouth along with a heavy concentrated dose of pure alpha. He moaned, giving into his instinctual urge to rub himself against every part of Hannibal.

He wriggled down the bed, until he was eye to eye with Hannibal’s cock. Had he not been flush with heat and mating hormones, Will would have been intimidated by the size. As it was, he felt his hole clench in want, and slick spilled down his thighs. Hannibal rumbled in want at the scent, and his cock jerked. Experimentally, Will grasped it, feeling at the base where the knot would swell. It was already pulsing a bit. He ran his hand up the shaft and rolled the foreskin away from the head, red and glistening.

Looking up at Hannibal propped up above him on his forearms, he wrapped his lips around the head and sucked. He was rewarded with a strangled groan and a spurt of salty precum. Hannibal reached down and pulled him so he was laying lengthwise beneath him again.

“Beautiful boy, your appetite will be insatiable once awakened, won’t it?” Will just purred throatily at him, and wrapped his legs around his hips to gain better leverage to thrust against him. The alpha retaliated, by capturing one of his nipples between his lips and sucking until

his back arched off the bed. Hannibal pulled back, pressing Will's chest down when he tried to follow. He grabbed the omega behind the knees, folding him almost in half, before ducking down.

"What are you-OH! OH, FUCK! HANNIBAL!" The alpha had pressed his face to Will's cleft and was lapping the slick spilling from him, pressing his tongue inside his hole. He hadn't done this during the previous heat. Will had heard of this act, but had thought it sounded unsanitary and unappealing. He was rapidly revising his opinion.

"Yes, yes, alpha, mate, more, please, fuck, more!" Hannibal obliged him, pressing in two fingers, and scissoring them, stretching and testing, preparing his mate for what was to come.

Just when Will thought he was going to lose his mind from pleasure, Hannibal sat back on his heels, manhandling Will into the position he wanted, grabbing a pillow to slide under his hips, and spreading his knees wide and out. Will whimpered as he felt his cockhead nudged against his opening.

"Hannibal."

"Yes, mylimasis, I am here, my lovely mate." He kissed the mark he had made on Will's throat before thrusting in one thick, smooth slide. The noise that came from Will's throat was primal. Their bodies fell into an ancient rhythm, working with and against each other as they felt the bond forming between them. Hannibal snarled, and gave a jarring thrust, seating his knot inside Will's body, locking them together, and they reached the peak together, falling into a storm tossed sea as they clutched one another close.

The Ties that Bind

Chapter Summary

Weaving two lives together is hard work.

Chapter Notes

A short chapter. The title is really too pretentious for what this is, but I couldn't think of anything else

Warning: there is a description of a panic attack in this chapter. If that's something that bothers you, please skip it.

Hannibal acted quickly after binding Will to him. The omega agreed readily to pack up his things and stay with Hannibal for the few weeks before their departure. With the bond so knew, both parties were constantly drawn to each other, wanting to stay in physical contact whenever possible. Hannibal eagerly guided Will in his explorations of sexual pleasure. They spent his next full heat wrapped tightly together in Hannibal's bed, unwilling to be parted long enough to even catch their breath.

As they lived in the modern age, there were many logistical issues that cropped up during the process of joining their lives together. They filed their bonding papers and had a small civil ceremony in town hall. Hannibal offered to throw something more lavish once they settled in Baltimore, which Will vehemently rejected. They were pleasantly surprised when Will's father made the drive from his current stopping place in Georgia to witness their official union.

The man was about what Hannibal expected from Will's descriptions, quiet and worn around the edges, but with a gruff fondness for his son. Hannibal watched the two embrace awkwardly, the gesture obviously not one of frequent ease. The elder Graham had a firm, callused handshake and gave Hannibal a familiar steely glare while admonishing him to take care of Will. He stayed the night and left early the next morning. Will didn't seem upset he hadn't stayed longer.

"We get along alright, but I don't think he was ever really sure what to make of me. I was such a weird kid, he started sending form letters to the guidance counselors whenever I started a new school telling them to just leave me be."

"Did he not think you needed their assistance?"

“He knew that I didn’t like having people messing in my head. I think he was more surprised I took a shrink for a mate than that I had bonded someone I’d only known a few months.” Will had, in Hannibal’s opinion, turned rather sulky when he discovered that Hannibal had left hospital work behind a year ago to open a psychiatric practice. He supplemented his time by teaching courses, as he did not have a large client base yet. Hannibal ignored the slur against his chosen profession.

“I didn’t get the sense he disapproved of our match, but you would know better than I.”

“No, he’s relieved I found someone.” A few days later, an envelope containing Will’s mother’s engagement and wedding ring arrived. It seemed the man gave them his blessing in his own way.

It took some persuading to convince Will to go ahead and apply to colleges in Baltimore. He admitted to not comfortable using Hannibal’s money and insisted on keeping separate bank accounts. While Hannibal wanted to insist on paying Will’s expenses, as it was his right as his alpha to provide, he knew that this was a battle that required careful diplomacy. He suggested a compromise.

“Use the time before we leave finding and applying to scholarships, fellowships, work studies, and the like. Use your savings to pay for the books and supplies, and let me make up the difference in tuition.”

Will was reluctant to give up his job at the library, but could see the wisdom in Hannibal’s suggestion. He tentatively agreed, spending his days researching and writing. He applied to several colleges and universities in the area, but focused on John Hopkins after Hannibal informed him that he was entitled to a discount on tuition as a spouse of an associate professor. He had to rush to meet the deadlines if he wanted to start in the fall.

Unbeknownst to Will, Hannibal had already made a few calls to select people at John Hopkins, donating a rather large sum to their medical program, guaranteeing that there would be an acceptance letter waiting for his mate at the house in Baltimore after their move.

Hannibal’s colleagues and a few of his students put together a small party for him before he left, thanking him for guest lecturing. This secretly amused Hannibal as he had neglected them for most of the semester, politely declining invitations for drinks after work or other overtures of camaraderie. He saw this as an opportunity to provide them with the reason for his standoffish behavior and to begin to ease Will into the more social aspects that came from being Hannibal’s mate.

Predictably, Will was unenthusiastic about the idea.

“They’re all going to think I’m some gold digging trash that tricked my way into bonding with you.”

“Do I come across as a person who would fall for such ploys?”

“No, but they won’t be judging you, they’ll be judging me.”

“Or perhaps they will see an older alpha advantage of a young, naive omega. It is true that some people see scandal in everything, but those tend to be persons with very dull lives of their own. We know the truth of our situation so what should it matter what others think?”

“Most people, they’re just so *loud* all the time, even when they aren’t talking, every small facial tick and body movement screams what they’re thinking. It’s deafening and stifling. If there’s a bunch of people, it’s like my brain doesn’t know what to do with all the information and I turn into this exposed nerve that feels everything that everyone else is feeling, and I don’t know what to do or how to act and I just, I just-” Will’s voice increases in pitch and he begins to shake and hyperventilate.

Hannibal approached Will cautiously, wanting to take him in his arms, but unsure if that would make things worse. He could feel echos of what Will was experiencing through the bond, ripples warning him of danger even though he knew intellectually that the only thing will was under attack from was his own mind.

“Will, can you try to take a deep breath for me? Four seconds in and four seconds out. I’ll count for you.” Will struggled, but after a few false starts he managed it.

“Good, another one if you can.” This one came much easier, and he could see the boy start to relax minutely.

“Is it alright if I hold you?” Will reached for him, still shaking. Hannibal gently took the boy in his arms, pressing his face to his chest, deliberately taking the slow deep breaths he used in meditation. After a few minutes, he could feel Will instinctively matching his breathing, soothed by his pheromones and calm demeanor.

“Are you feeling better?” Will nodded into his shirt.

“I’m sorry, it’s so stupid.”

“It’s not stupid, Will. You have the rare gift of being able to understand others by reflecting them. I can see how at times that could feel like a curse. Perception's a tool that's pointed on both ends. You avoid social situations because they overwhelm you, but I believe with practice you could build walls and forts in your mind that will help keep others out unless you choose to let them in.”

“You think so?” Will’s voice was small and tired.

“I know so. The human mind is fascinating and highly adaptable, and your mind in particular holds so much potential.” Will huffed, but didn’t seem to have the energy to argue anymore.

“I will not force you to go to the party, Will, but I hope you find the fortitude within yourself to come. There will not be a great number of people, and you will never have to see any of them again after this night. If it becomes too much for you, we can leave.”

“I’ll think about it.”

He did end up accompanying Hannibal to the party, which was as low key as he expected. It was held at an inexpensive restaurant near the college that served as a hangout for many of the students and professors. There was hand tossed pizza and plenty of beer and alcohol flowing. It was not the sort of event Hannibal usually attended, but he comported himself with his usual aplomb.

The other guests were taken aback to meet Will, but on the whole treated him with genial curiosity, offering their congratulations to the new couple. The head of the psychology department, a fierce battle axe alpha woman scolded Hannibal for keeping Will tucked away. How were people supposed to buy bonding gifts if no one knew they had bonded? Hannibal laughed almost genuinely at that, assuring her that they didn't need anything. And could she blame him for wanting to keep Will all to himself?

Will handled himself better than either of them expected, sticking closely to Hannibal's side, wearing his reading glasses so he didn't have to make eye contact with anyone. He found he didn't actually have to talk much, just a few words if someone asked him a direct question and he'd direct the conversation back to Hannibal who effortlessly picked up the slack. They stayed for three hours before Will signaled to Hannibal that he had reached his limit, and he made their excuses the couple departing to a chorus of goodbyes and well wishes.

Hannibal could feel Will's mental exhaustion through the bond and pondered on what his empathy felt like first hand. Hannibal was quite aware he was somewhat lacking in the empathy department, perhaps fate had put Will in his path so they would balance each other out. What Will see in him. How much did the boy guess? Hannibal suspected that given enough time, Will could open all the doors in Hannibal's mind and know him completely, exposing all his secrets. The concept excited rather than worried as it probably should have because he knew that whatever Will saw in Hannibal would be reflected in the boy until the lines between them blurred.

A sense of profound satisfaction swelled in Hannibal when he finally carried Will across the threshold of his home in Baltimore, his mate laughing in exasperation at the old fashion gesture. But Hannibal knew that there was power in such rituals, and taking Will into his lair just tightened the binds intertwining their lives every closer.

Life in Baltimore

Chapter Summary

Will's just beginning to realize what he's gotten himself into.

Chapter Notes

I found an interesting article about the set design for Hannibal.
http://www.latimes.com/home/la-lh-hannibal-tv-show-set-design-patti-podesta-20130605-story.html

I also have been putting together a Hannigram playlist. Any suggestions? Put them in the comments, and I'll post it with tomorrow's chapter.

Being bonded was not what Will anticipated. For starters, he had never really been able to picture himself finding a mate, antisocial as he was. If he ever had imagined his perfect mate, the fantasy in no way resembled reality. He had always heard that bonded mates shared a special connection, aware of each other on a level un-bonded persons couldn't understand. As Will tended to be hyper aware of other people anyway, he had been unimpressed by the stories of mates who could always tell what the other was feeling. He had expected to sense something from Hannibal through the bond, though. There was an increased need to be physically close, and he was able to feel when he was near. However, he didn't get any increased awareness of the man's emotions. Sometimes he thought he felt a flicker, as if he was glimpsing the shape of his mind, but it was gone too fast to be sure. His alpha remained enigmatic, and Will stayed carefully watchful.

Moving to a new city didn't phase the omega much, after all he had spent most of his life going from town to town. But suddenly being elevated to a significantly higher economic strata caused some culture shock. Not having to scrimp and save every penny was certainly a relief, but he was still a simple person at heart. Privately, he also thought a lot of Hannibal's lavish lifestyle was silly and pretentious. Well, maybe not so privately. He derived sardonic pleasure from poking fun at some of his mate's more exorbitant propensities, but he hadn't realized exactly how encompassing Hannibal's persona was until he found himself situated right in the heart of it.

Hannibal's entire home was designed as a backdrop for his grand performance. Will knew that the alpha presented the world with a carefully crafted mask, even he rarely saw past it despite being bonded to the man. Be that as it may, Will had expected his home to be slightly

more genuine, a place where Hannibal could relax his guard and reveal his true self. While the house certainly resembled a fortress, it wasn't his stronghold against the world.

Not that the chosen facade wasn't informative in and of itself. The house was decorated with intimidation and power in mind. Every detail was a precisely selected manipulation, from the dark wall paneling and ornate fixtures to the ostentatious artwork. Everything explicitly stated, 'I am the one in control, and I am better than you in every way.'

It occurred to Will that he may have mated a megalomaniac.

He felt overwhelmed by the strangeness of his new situation. It seemed so much starker here than when they had been in New Orleans. Will recognized the shift in their power dynamic, as if it hadn't been unbalanced enough in Hannibal's favor, and didn't know how to regain his footing. He'd willingly, enthusiastically even, thrown himself into Hannibal's game and was now realizing that he may be in over his head. That didn't mean he was going to stop treading, though.

He began to carve out his own spaces in Hannibal's home and in their life in general. Hannibal's presence could become smothering after a while. Will recognized that he needed to set up boundaries or risk disappearing into the other man. His sense of self had always been rather shaky thanks to his overactive empathy, so he focused on things he knew definitively to be Will.

He went back to making lures again and scouted out some good places to fish near the city. He claimed a corner of the sunroom to set up a desk and workspace, enjoying the light, open atmosphere of the room in contrast to the oppressiveness of the rest of the house. Eventually, he wanted to build a workshed that he could tinker in, but he didn't want to have to ask Hannibal for it. There was pleasure in seeing his clutter taking up room in Hannibal's domain; dollar store shampoo in on the shelf in the high tech shower, beat up boots next to polished Italian leather in the closet.

He knew better than to touch the kitchen. That was all Hannibal's territory, even getting a glass of water felt intrusive. Not that he knew how to use even a fraction of the appliances in there. He was content to leave the food preparation to the expert, though it did get a bit annoying when he wanted to make a snack when his mate wasn't around. He mentioned this once and Hannibal started leaving covered cheese and fruit trays and other finger foods in the fridge. That wasn't the exact reaction Will was looking for, but he wasn't complaining.

The summer flew by as they settled in together, preferring to spend their time alone together at home as they adjusted to the domestic life. Will continued taking the pill for birth control, and he had another heat right before his first semester began. He had his suspicions on how he was accepted so readily but couldn't prove it as Hannibal wasn't admitting to anything. They discussed what Will was going to study as they cuddled together between rounds during the heat.

"I kind of want to study criminology. When I was growing up, I wanted to be a police officer or an FBI agent. They don't offer it as a major, but I could probably do an independent study."

“I’m surprised you are so interested in law enforcement. Not that I think you are incapable, I just have not heard you mention it before.” Hannibal was spooned against Will’s nude back, both of them only under a thin sheet. 15,000 thread count Egyptian cotton sheets in dark red because Hannibal was Hannibal.

“I don’t know if they’d even let me in the field. They tend to want more stable people in jobs that involve carrying guns. Not to mention the gender bias.”

“You are not nearly as unstable as you seem to think, my dear, and many glass ceilings have been broken in recent years for omegas and beta women in such careers. I think the FBI could benefit greatly from someone of your intelligence and skill. I would certainly feel safer if you were in the FBI…protecting my interests.” Hannibal ran his hand down the length of Will’s torso, cupping his hip.

“Well, I’ll be sure to get you to write me a reference letter if I ever apply.”

“As charming as sarcasm is on you, I would gladly write such a letter. That is, of course, if I cannot persuade you to take my own path of psychology or psychiatry.”

Will snorted into his pillow. “What? You really want me butting in on your turf?”

“We could be partners professionally as well as personally. Not everyone is comfortable having an alpha as their doctor. We would be in a unique position to attract a wider array of patients.”

“I would make a terrible therapist. I don’t like people enough. And my empathy would just end up making me as crazy as the people I’m suppose to help.”

“You would be amazed at the number of people who go into psychology because of personality deficiencies rather than any desire to help others.”

Will thought over the myriad counselors and shrinks he’d met in his youth. “No I wouldn’t.”

The conversation ended as another wave of heat washed over him. Several days later, as Will was looking at the course catalog online he remembered the conversation and had to wonder: What made Hannibal go into psychiatry? He felt like he was probably didn’t want to know the true answer.

Planning

Chapter Summary

A conversation with Bedelia inspires Hannibal to get back to work.

Chapter Notes

Guess who's back back back. Back again gain gain.

I kinda ran headfirst into a bout of writers block. I'm spent sometime outlining and now have a general idea of how the next few chapters are going to go. I'm not real happy with this chapter, but it serves its purpose to help us get to the next plot point I guess.

Thanks for all your kudos! And please, if you have any suggestions or questions leave them in the comments. I always try to answer.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal settled himself in his usual chair in Bedelia's sitting room, elegantly crossing one leg over his knee to complete the symmetry of their poses. He had not seen or spoken to the other doctor since he had left for New Orleans, almost nine months prior. She still looked as poised and beautiful as ever, slightly longer hair the only discernable change in her appearance. She observed him over her usual glass of wine, eyes shrewd. It was obvious she had heard of his bonding. It had been announced in the Society papers, causing much speculation amongst the upper crust of Baltimore, increasing into wild, outlandish rumors the more time that passed without a public appearance of the couple.

Hannibal could almost smell the envy pouring off the icy blonde, but she was far too professional to let it show. He was well aware she harbored a certain fascination toward him and his inner darkness. Bedelia was intelligent enough to recognize the danger he presented, but too ensnared in her own curiosity and attraction to cut ties. As long as she believed that she was the only one to glimpse past his ‘person suit’ as she dubbed it, she was satisfied with the careful arm’s length relationship that they had established. He was interested in how she would react to meeting Will, but that introduction would have to wait. He waited for her to initiate the conversation.

“Is there anything in particular you would like to talk about today?” Every word carefully chosen and enunciated, as was her habit.

Hannibal always attempted to go into his therapy without prior planning. He had modeled his own psychiatric style after Bedelia's and mostly continued their appointments so he could use her as a sounding board to order his thoughts. After all, he couldn't be his own psychiatrist. So he was never quite sure what their discussions would be about until he came in. He considered keeping her in suspense about his new mate, but decided he'd rather not waste part of their hour.

"I've experienced a significant change in my life since we last spoke. I've taken a bond mate." He paused, waiting to see how she responded to his conversational volley.

"My congratulations. How are you and your new spouse adjusting to this 'significant change'?" She sat her wine on a spindle legged side table, setting her hand atop her clip board. He was amused by her subtle probe at the mystery of his unknown mate.

"I have not shared a living space with anyone for a long time. Even when Will is gone from the house, evidence of his presence lingers. Yet the reminders only serve to draw awareness of his absence."

"You long for him." The undernotes of bitterness in her tone was perceptible to only the finest of palates.

"It is not uncommon for bonded couples to be keenly conscious of one another."

"Does he ache for you?" Ah, she was showing her hand now. He was a bit disappointed that she hadn't lasted longer. Perhaps she had become complacent during the hiatus of their sessions. But it was an intriguing question and deserved due consideration. Turning, he considered the windows that dominated the walls, the gauzy curtains casting a haze over the view of the shaded lawn.

"I believe Will is unsettled by what he feels for me. He attempts to build boundaries between us."

"You yourself spend a lot of time building walls, Hannibal."

"Boundaries will always be subject to negotiation."

"It's natural to want to see if someone is... clever enough to climb over."

"Of that, I have no doubt." That seemed to throw her a bit. She brought a fist to her chin, tilting her head slightly as she studied him.

"Do you know where you are with each other? Or where you want to be?"

And there was the crux. Hannibal knew exactly what he wanted for will. For both of them. Ironically, it was getting Will to see that was the issue. The words came slowly, images unfolding in his mind as he spoke.

"No one can be fully aware of another human being unless we love them. By that love we see potential in our beloved. Through that love, we allow our beloved to see their potential."

“You see potential in Will?” There was reluctant interest in her voice now. Despite her misgivings, Bedelia's weakness would always be her curiosity.

He let his person suit slip, just to watch her freeze like a startled doe. “I plan to show him his potential.”

Hannibal began making plans as he left Bedelia's home. It was high time he formally introduced his Will to Society. What better way to show off his new mate than throwing a dinner party? The blue bloods of Baltimore would be clawing at each other to get an invitation to see the elusive Doctor Lecter’s chosen omega. The menu needed careful consideration.

His wheeldex was set in a hidden alcove in the pantry right next to his recipe box. He had started storing them there after Will moved in. The omega wasn’t ready to learn what Hannibal had been feeding him, and he didn’t want to take the chance that his clever boy would put two and two together. Not yet.

In a fit of romantic whimsy, Hannibal chose three suitable pigs based on their occupations: florist who had sent the wrong type of greenery for a separate event several years ago and then refused to issue a refund for the mistake, a jeweler who tried to pass off a set of cubic zirconia cufflinks as real diamonds, and a sommelier who had the gall to question Hannibal’s choice in wine pairings. This party was for Will after all, and it seemed only right to present his omega with gifts of flowers, jewelry, and wine.

Deciding on the displays was something of a challenge. He would have liked to revisit Botticelli, but that seemed unwise after the scrutiny he had received in Florence. Something different seemed more appropriate for this work, anyway. Art evolved as a reflection of the artist’s ongoing life experiences. Hannibal’s life had been profoundly changed by Will, and he felt the need to show it in his art.

New Year’s Eve seemed an appropriate date for the party. The symbolic new beginnings appealed to the alpha, and it gave him plenty of time to complete his new masterpiece.

Chapter End Notes

Y'all didn't think I forgot about the playlist did you? Here's what I have so far:

Love Crime by Siouxsie (of course)
Behind Blue Eyes by The Who
Control by Puddle of Mudd
Cutie Boots by Stepdad
Bad Things by Jace Everett
Getting Away With Murder by Papa Roach
Going Under by Evanescence
O Death sung by Jen Titus

I Miss You by blink-182
The Music of the Night from The Phantom of the Opera
Needing/Getting by OK GO (If you have not seen the video for this, watch it, it's awesome)
No More Sorrow by Linkin Park
Pet by A Perfect Circle
The Pretender by Foo Fighters
Secret by The Pierces
Secrets by OneRepublic
Somewhere Only We Know by Keane (I prefer the Glee version, but the original is good too)
Turn Off the Lights by Panic! at the Disco
Despite What You've Been Told by Two Gallants
The Unforgiven II by Metallica
The Unnamed Feeling by Metallica
Until it Sleeps by (oh look) Metallica
Walk Away from the Sun by Seether
Maker of my Sorrow by Eliza Rickman
Where Did You Sleep Last Night performed by Nirvana
With or Without You by U2
Trust by Neon Trees
Death Valley by Fall Out Boy
Always by Saliva
Glycerine by Bush (I like the acoustic version more)
Everybody Wants to Rule the World cover by Lorde
Demons by Imagine Dragons
Blinding by Florence and the Machine
Glitter and Gold by Barns Courtney (there's a really good Hannibal fan vid of this song too)
Beat the Devil's Tattoo by Black Rebel Motorcycle Club
cRaZie$ by I Fight Dragons (but do you fight Great Red Dragons?)
Rolling in the Deep cover by Go Radio
Who I am Hates Who I've Been by Relient K (acoustic version)
Bad Blood cover by Twenty One Two
Marionette by Antonia
Howl by Florence and the Machine
The Devil Within by Digital Daggers
No Light, No Light by Florence and the Machine
Drumming Song by Florence and the Machine
Stitches by Shawn Mendes
Flesh by Simon Curtis
Pit of Vipers Simon Curtis
Angels by Vicetone
Control by Halsey
Gasoline by Halsey
Help Our Souls by NIHLS
Kiss With a Fist by Florence and the Machine (I really like them, okay?)

Polarize by Twenty One Pilots
Borderline by Tove Styrke

If you have any suggestions to add to the list, let me know!

Making Friends

Chapter Summary

Will goes to college and meets some new people.

Chapter Notes

I swear this is not turning into a college fic. Will just happens to be in college.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adjusting to college life wasn't as difficult as Will had feared. In comparison to how his life had been turned upside down by bonding, it was a relatively simple transition. One thing that had followed him throughout his nomadic childhood was a dedication to schoolwork. It was one of the few positive things Will attributed to himself; he was good at learning. He enjoyed immersing himself in knowledge, and he was finally at a place where that pursuit was actively encouraged.

What he had been most worried about was the social aspects of attending a large university. However, he found that its was surprisingly easy to keep to himself. Most of the classes were so large that he was just another face in the crowd. It was a refreshing sort of anonymity. If he kept his head down on his way to class, no one bothered him. Since he didn't live on campus or go out of his way to get involved in any clubs or groups, he found to his relief that he was able to go about his studies in his own solitary way. That is until his Intro to Forensic professor decided to assign a group project.

The other students were quick to gather into clusters while Will sat mutely at the back of the lecture hall, unsure what to do. The thought of approaching any of the others making him want to shrink into the uncomfortable chair. Oh god, he was going to have to tell the professor he couldn't find a group, and he'd fail the assignment or worse get stuck in with some random people that didn't really want him and-

"Hey, you wanna be in my group?" A feminine voice interrupted his minor anxiety attack.

"Uh, sure." He responded before he registered who was talking to him, hoping he didn't sound too pathetically grateful. He probably looked like a drowning victim thrown a life preserver.

"My friends Brian and Jimmy aren't here today, but I texted them and they said they'd be in the group, too. But three people isn't much of a group. I think I sit behind you in Cog Psych,

you have Dr. Flombaum?" The pretty Asian, beta woman had an open, cheerful countenance and didn't seem put off by Will's lack of eye contact or scruffy demeanor.

"Yeah. I'm Will." He discreetly wiped his palm off on his jeans before offering it.

"Beverly. I gotta get to my next class, but why don't we exchange numbers and plan to meet up later?"

"Oh-okay." Will fumbled a bit with the fancy phone Hannibal had gotten him, bringing up the new contacts. It probably said a lot about him that the only two numbers programmed into it were his mate's and his father's.

"See you around, Will." Beverly waved as she shouldered her bag and strode off, leaving Will a bit dazed at the interaction.

He did, in fact, see her around. Not only did they have Cognitive Psychology and Intro to Forensics together, but they also had the same adviser, which he found out when he ran into her waiting on a bench outside the office the next day.

"Hey, Will! You here to be advised?" She patted the space beside her. "Professor Steven is behind schedule, the student before me just went in there."

"Oh. I guess it's good I don't have anything else this afternoon, then." Will awkwardly perched on the edge of the bench, situating his messenger bag on his lap.

"What are you thinking about taking next semester?"

"A few required classes: Classics and health so I can go ahead and get them out of the way. I'm going to try and get into Abnormal Psychology. I was also interested in Philosophy and Cognitive Science."

"I was interested in that last one, too, but I probably won't be able to fit it in with all the labs I need to take. I'm hoping to declare as an Anatomy major."

"I didn't know that was a major."

"It's one of the focuses of the Biology major. What about you?"

"I'm still not sure. I've thought about psychology, and my bond-mate is encouraging me toward that, but Behavioral Biology looks pretty interesting, too."

"You're bonded?" She seemed surprised.

"Yes." He wasn't sure if he should be offended or not. He could scarcely believe that he was bonded either most days, much less to someone like Hannibal.

"Sorry, you just seem kind of young. And that sounded even ruder. I'm sorry, I'll just stop talking now before I choke to death on my own foot."

A genuine laugh took Will by surprise, startling Beverly into looking at him.

“It’s okay. I’m used to being the awkward one in conversations, so this is a nice change.” She chuckled ruefully with him.

They actually managed to relax and have a pleasant conversation. Beverly had a sharp wit and laid back nature that put Will at ease. By the time She was called into her appointment, they had plans to meet at the library later and Will realized he might be on his way to making his first friend in Baltimore.

Brian and Jimmy turned out to be a freshman alpha and a sophomore beta respectively. Even with his general aversion to people, Will had to admit they were entertaining to watch. They always were bickering over something, usually something completely random and arbitrary. But when they found something they agreed on, they would finish each other’s sentences. If Will didn’t know better, he’d say they were bonded. Turns out they were just roommates.

They had a healthy dose of fear and respect for Beverly, who was comfortable cracking jokes and bantering with them until it was time to get to work, then she put her foot down. Will was impressed that she was willing to go toe to toe with an alpha, even if Brian was fairly low instinct. She told him later that she had four older brothers, all alphas and that she learned pretty early how to stand up for herself.

Both of them accepted Will fairly readily, though they were a bit nosier than Beverly who didn’t seem to mind him keeping quiet about his life outside of school, or in general. Thankfully, they were easily deflected for the most part. Will found that he actually enjoyed being around the other three students. Their project went so well that they talked about making a standing weekly study session.

“If you guys would be down for that. With finals coming up, I need all the help I can get.” Brian said before class. Jimmy nodded emphatically beside him.

“It sounds like a good idea to me. Will, you in?” Beverly asked. “Please say yes, I need you to translate the Flombaum for me.”

Will hesitated but he really didn’t see a reason to say no, and he could probably use the help, too.

“All right, but is it okay if we do it on Thursday nights? My mate works late that day so I’d just be sitting around by myself anyway.”

“Ah, yes the mysterious mate. What did you say his name was again?” Jimmy folded his hands under his chin and looked at Will expectantly.

“Cut it out, Price. If Will doesn’t want to talk about his personal life, you shouldn’t pry.” Beverly scolded.

“I bet they’re famous, that’s why Will never talks about ‘em.” Brian chimed in.

“It’s alright Bev. I don’t really mind. I just don’t like to talk about myself much.”

“Well, you wouldn’t be talking about you, you’d be talking about your mate.” Jimmy pointed out.

“Who is it, by the way?” Brian asked.

Will sighed, well it wasn’t like it was a secret. “His name is Hannibal.”

“That’s not a name you hear too often. Did you meet him while invading Carthage?” Brian said.

“Dumbass, Hannibal Barca was *from* Carthage, he *invaded* Italy.” Jimmy shot back.

“Yeah, but I asked *Will* if *he* had met him while invading Carthage, like Hannibal was already there and Will invaded.”

“Yes, I’m sure Will met his mate invading a country that hasn’t existed since before the common era.”

“Well, obviously not. I was being facetious.”

“It is an unusual name, though.” Beverly said to keep the argument from escalating further. “Isn’t there a professor teaching some psychology class next semester named Hannibal? Hannibal Lecher or something”

Will had to choke back a laugh. He’d have to remember that one. “Lecter.”

“Yeah, that was it. Wait, is he your-” Beverly suddenly got excited.

“Um, yeah.”

“You’re married to a professor?” Brian asked.

“So we’re all signing up to take that course right? I mean we gotta.” Jimmy said.

“It’s graduate students only, and teaching isn’t his main profession. He’s a psychiatrist.” Will said, feeling moderately defensive. Brian looked like he wanted to ask more, but Beverly cut him off.

“Thursday nights work fine for me.” The other two agreed as the professor called the class to attention, saving Will from having to answer any more questions.

As Will was driving back home that afternoon, he saw dog trotting along the side of the road. Worried someone’s pet had gotten loose, he stopped the car and called out. The dog shied away from him, but Will could see that he was a stray, covered in dirt and collarless. Iit stayed well away but didn’t run, watching him warily. Will got the half of a sandwich left from his lunch out of the car, and broke a small piece off, tossing it to the dog. It cautiously came closer, sniffing for a long time before grabbing the bite and retreating to a safe distance. Bit by bit, Will fed it the sandwich until he’d lured the dog close enough to pet. He saw that it was male and seemed friendly enough since Will had given it food. He coaxed it into the back of his car, already mentally preparing a list of what he would need to care for it. He

knew there was a Petco not far from where he was, so he ran in and got some essentials. It wasn't until he pulled up in the garage that he considered what he was going to say to his borderline obsessive compulsive husband who kept his house looking like a museum.

Luckily, Hannibal wasn't home yet. Will got the dog washed and dried, which he bore with the dignity of a martyr. As Will brushed him, he considered names. His father always said it was harder to get rid of an animal if it had been named. His mind drifted to one of his favorite books, which he was currently rereading, *1984* .

"What do you think of Winston?" He asked the now clean dog. He *boffed* back at him, which Will took as approval of the name.

"Well, Winston, best put on your biggest, saddest puppy eyes, because we are going to have to do some serious persuasion if you're going to stay here."

They were situated in the sunroom when he heard Hannibal open the door. He imagined him pausing, scenting the air. Will knew Hannibal would know immediately there was a dog in the house. The man had a nose like, well, a hound. He couldn't hear the alpha's footfalls, but he could sense him getting nearer until he appeared in the doorway.

Hannibal didn't say anything, just looked pointedly at the dog sitting at Will's knee. Winston observed him back, head tilted and ears perked. Will was silently grateful that the dog hadn't gotten aggressive or tried to jump on Hannibal.

"Are you going to introduce me to your new friend, Will?" Hannibal finally asked after a full minute of tense silence.

"Winston, this is Hannibal. Hannibal, this is Winston." Winston licked his hand, and he gave him a rub on the head.

Hannibal finally moved into the room, moving to loom over the two, but staying far enough away to avoid getting fur on his suit. Will peeked up at him through his eyelashes.

"I found him on the side of the road. I think he's a stray."

"Not anymore, it would appear." Hannibal didn't seem upset. Will tested their bond, but still couldn't pick up much from it.

"So it's okay if we keep him?"

"If it makes you happy to have him here, far be it from me to deny you the pleasure of his company. We will have to take him to a veterinarian to make sure he is healthy and has all his vaccinations. I would prefer he remain outside. The yard is fenced in so he will not get loose."

"It can get awful cold out there at night."

"He has a fur coat." Will brought out his own biggest, saddest puppy eyes. Hannibal sighed. "I suppose he can remain inside until we can get a suitable house built for him. But, under no

circumstances is he allowed in the kitchen or dining room. And he certainly is not sleeping in the bed with us."

"Noted." Will stood up, the smile on his face like sunlight breaking through clouds. He pressed his lips to Hannibal's. "Thank you." he whispered.

"I understand the urge to bring home strays. Though, I've acquiesced to it only once." It took Will a moment to realize Hannibal was talking about him. He bit the alpha's lip in retaliation.

"Let's hope Winston does not pick up your bad habits."

"You're not funny, you know."

"You are entitled to your opinion, of course."

"How magnanimous of you."

"Speaking of which…"

"Oh, no."

"I am planning a New Year's Eve feast."

"That sounds like it will require me to be sociable."

"Ideally, as the party will be in your honor."

"*My* honor?"

"Ours, if you prefer. It will serve as the announcement of our bonding."

"I thought the newspaper did that."

"It did not have quite the personal touch a dinner party will have. As much as I would like to keep you all to myself, you will have to be introduced to Society at some point. It is an occupational hazard of the social circles I inhabit."

"Yes, being rich and popular seems like such a burden."

"One which you now share."

Will looked down at Winston, who had flopped down on the floor. The dog noticed the attention and thumped his tail.

"This is important to you isn't it?"

"Yes." The other man said simply.

Will sighed, knowing the decision had already been made. "I guess you'll get that chance to dress me up after all."

Chapter End Notes

I had not planned to put Zeller and Price in this fic, but they slipped in anyway.

I had planned to put Winston in, because how could I not?

Setting the Scene

Chapter Summary

Hannibal continues getting ready for his big dinner party.

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long, I know what needs to happen next, but I was having a hard time actually figuring out how to write it. This is a fairly big chapter, though, so enjoy that. I'll try to get the next chapter up a little quicker.

Hannibal sets his masterpiece up to be found on the 21st of December. It itched him to know what the “professionals” would make of his break in pattern, if they even recognized it as a Ripper kill. It rankled to think that they might not. Freddie Lounds probably would. She was a relatively new journalist, but was fast working her way up the ranks of the seedy tabloid business, a dubious accomplishment. As sensationalist as her writing may be, she was actually rather shrewd when it came to her speculations and analysis of crimes. One just had to look through melodramatic drivel to find it.

The most difficult part had been finding time to put everything into motion. Used to doing his hunting late at night, Hannibal had never had to work around another person’s presence before. Certainly he had lovers in the past, but they were short lived. It was easy to slip out of the bed of a casual partner in the middle of the night, not so much with a bonded spouse. That his spouse was extremely perceptive and often had trouble sleeping just added to the difficulty. He considered drugging Will so he would sleep through the night, but was worried about any possible side effects giving him away. Will had refused sleep medication previously saying it tended to give him migraines and nightmares. Ironically, it was the omega himself who gave him the perfect opportunity. He began meeting with a study group once a week. During midterms, it became apparent that they had a habit of working late into the night. This had been rather annoying the first time he returned home to an empty house, but he had no plausible reason to keep Will from seeing them. He supposed, too, that the socialization was good for the skittish boy. It all turned out for the best in the end, anyway.

Hannibal got almost everything taken care of during Will’s finals. The abductions took place one night he knew Will had an extensive report due. He stowed the unconscious pigs in the small cell under an abandoned factory. It was better not to risk processing them in the basement, not with how elaborate the setup needed to be. After dropping them off, he went home and brewed a large carafe of coffee, put together some sandwiches, and drove to the

campus library. He charmed the student working the night desk into letting him know which study room Will was in. The scene that greeted him through the window was comical. One of the young men was curled up a corner, jacket wadded up under his head apparently trying to catch a nap. The other was flipping through flashcards so fast, Hannibal wasn't sure how he was retaining any information. The woman, who he assumed must be the Beverly Will had spoken so much about, had a pink highlighter smudge across her cheek, probably from the uncapped one behind her ear. An orange one was clenched in her hang as she intensely scrutinized a thick book. Will's hair was wilder than ever from where he had obviously been running his fingers through it. His reading glasses were slightly askew and he scowled at his laptop as if it had deeply insulted him. All but the sleeping one looked up in relief when he opened the door.

"Hannibal, what are you doing here?" Will asked. He sounded tired, but pleased to see his mate. Hannibal moved into the room, setting his burdens down on the small bit of the table not covered by study material or junk food wrappers.

"My university days are not so far behind me that I don't remember what exam week is like. I brought you and your fellow students some sustenance."

"Is that coffee?" Beverly stares in what can only be described as a lustful manner at the thermal carafe.

"Please, help yourself." Jimmy and Beverly, being poor college students didn't have to be told twice about accepting free food especially when caffeine was involved. Jimmy threw paper wads at Brian until he woke up.

Hannibal moved behind Will, resting his hand on the back of his neck, thumb brushing over his mate bite, causing the omega to shift uncomfortably. He disliked public displays of affection which Hannibal knew. Having him in such close extended proximity to another alpha was making Hannibal's possessiveness flare up. Not that Zeller was much of a threat, being so low instinct. Though even sleep dazed, he had the sense to make a subtle sign of submission to the stronger alpha, lowering his eyes and staying on the floor, though he did sit up and accept a sandwich and cup of coffee from Jimmy.

"Oh, my god, I think this is the best sandwich I've ever had." Beverly spoke around the "ham" sandwich that she was inhaling.

"Yeah, you've been holding out on us, Will, keeping all this to yourself." Price's slight appreciative glance over Hannibal indicated he wasn't just talking about the food. Hannibal felt the warmth on his palm as blood rushed to Will's face. He cleared his throat, shaking off Hannibal's hand as he reached for a cup of coffee.

"When was the last time you ate something substantial?" Hannibal heavily suspected it had been the breakfast they had shared some sixteen hours prior. Will muttered under his breath, but took a sandwich, too, biting into it when Hannibal narrowed his eyes at him. The alpha stroked his hair in reward.

"So what are you all working on?" Hannibal listened to the students alternatively enthuse and complain about their projects. They all seemed relatively intelligent and well-adjusted, and

Hannibal grudgingly admitted to himself that Will could do worse in the acquaintance department. He didn't like Zeller much, the other alpha was somewhat coarse for Hannibal's sensibilities, but the others kept him in line fairly well. After a half hour, he collected the empty containers and bid them luck with their academic endeavors, giving Will a lingering kiss that caused the poor boy to blush brighter than ever.

The unexpected visit, like most of Hannibal's actions, served several purposes. It provided him an alibi should the need for one ever occur, he was able to judge Will's new acquaintances in person, and he conveyed his claim of Will.

Will seemed bothered by Hannibal's covert display of possessiveness, but didn't say anything about it. He got through his finals, earning respectably high marks. Once the semester was over, the omega relaxed marginally, arguing playfully with Hannibal over the Christmas decorations. He referred to the older man's tasteful matching decor. Even the presents that showed up beneath the eight foot high blue spruce placed in the front window fit the color scheme. Will began taking Winston for long walks, often coming back with silly ridiculous looking ornaments that he hung on the tree. His own gifts were wrapped in the most garish paper he could find. Hannibal bore the passive teasing with indulgent patience.

The night his gruesome tableau was due to go up, Hannibal invited Will to attend the opera with him and was predictably turned down. While he fully intended Will to join him at such events in the future, his mate's reclusiveness worked in his favor in this instance. He did, in fact attend the opera, enjoyed a passable performance of Mefistofele, but bowed out early from the socializing following the performance. It was fairly simple to collect the pre-prepared corpses and set them up.

He had arranged the tableau in an arboretum, the trees strung with twinkling lights reflected on the snow, giving the space an otherworldly atmosphere. The florist was suspended from the sturdier branches, dressed in a flowing white dress, arms reaching out beseechingly toward the jeweler who was reaching back but was held in an embrace by the sommelier. Hannibal had removed every bit of flesh from the sommelier so only the skeleton remained held together with wire and and cartledge, an impressive set of antlers attached at the skull and dressed in a rather sharp suit to contrast the rags of the jeweler. The hearts of the florist and jeweler were removed, the chest wounds left open to spill through their clothes. He'd also taken several other organs, but had been sure to sew those incisions back up as to not affect the scene. Posing the bodies took longer than he liked, but he had to admit it was worth it in the end.

Once finished, he simply stood back to admire his work, storing the image away in his mind palace. The most obvious interpretation of the spectacle was that of Dr. Faust, and he could not deny some inspiration from the old story. It was too perfect considering the opera. More personally, it represented himself and Will, though exactly which character was which was up for debate. That was one of the things that was beautiful about art, the meaning was often ambiguous even to the creator.

Will was asleep when he arrived home, not even waking when he showered or slipped into bed beside him. Hannibal gently ran a knuckle along the younger man's jaw, prickly with his early morning beard. He imagined Will helping him hunt the pigs, and setting up the scene.

He was sure that Will's fascinating mind could dream up the most exquisite designs. What would he think when he found out about Hannibal's display? He would have loved to hear the omega's interpretation immediately, but knew he had to be patient in this case. Appearing too eager would give the game away too soon, and they still had a party to host.

From a purely practical standpoint, taking all the flesh from the sommelier provided the amount of meat he needed for the feast. He had taken the hearts and livers from the other two, yes, but that was only a fraction of what was needed. Luckily the sommelier had been a large, fit man and came almost pre-marinaded from his professional imbibing. He had frozen and packaged the meat in his workshop at the factory, bringing it home a little at a time along with the other ingredients he needed. He began the preparations for the party a good deal of time in advanced, sending out handwritten invitations, scheduling the catering company he employed to assist with the cooking and serving, and going through his herb garden to see what needed to be specially treated.

He and Will spent a quiet first Christmas. They shared a fairly tame mid-day meal (by Hannibal's standards anyway) with filling comfort food, then retired with glasses that were more bourbon than eggnog despite Will still being underage. Winston stretched in front of the fire as they exchanged presents, and Hannibal had to admit to a certain warmth in his chest at the domesticity of the scene. He allowed himself to consider adding another small presence in the future, and found the idea alluring. He had never given much consideration to the idea of children in the past, but this was a surprisingly attractive way to bind Will even closer to him.

The preparations for the party picked up in earnest the day after Christmas, with less than a week to get everything ready. Will, wide eyed, at the amount of time and effort Hannibal was dedicating to the endeavor, took to spending more time outside with Winston so he wouldn't get in the way. He had tentatively offered his help at one point, but quickly realized he was out of his depth and left it all in Hannibal's more than capable hands.

The night of the party eventually arrived with everything on schedule and the catering staff hard at work. Hannibal excused himself from the kitchen to get himself and Will ready. He did a quick walk through of the dining area and public rooms, straightening things here and there. He glanced out the window into the backyard. Winston was on a lead attached to the little shed Will had built for him. That must mean Will was already upstairs. Sure enough, Will stood in their bedroom, one of the suits Hannibal had got him for Christmas laid on the bed. A towel was wrapped around his waist and his curls were still damp. Hannibal could not resist coming up behind him and nosing his neck. Will didn't resist, but he didn't reciprocate either.

"I'm not good at this sort of thing. Actually, I don't think I've ever been to this sort of thing before."

"Then how do you know you won't be good at it?"

"I don't have a great track record with social situations."

"I appreciate you stepping out of your comfort zone for me."

“Seems like I do that a lot since I met you.” Will grumbled, stepping away from Hannibal. “Will this suit suffice? Wouldn’t want to offend the host.”

“As you are one of the hosts, I don’t think that will be much of an issue.” Hannibal said mildly, moving to the closet to collect his own suit.

“We both know who’s really running this show.” Will called after him. There was a soft fwump indicating he’d dropped his towel.

“Ah, but everyone is coming to see you.” Hannibal had already placed his selected suit near the front of his closet, a pinstripe navy. He put the tie back, choosing a paisley instead that complimented the suit but with swirls that matched Will’s silver-blue outfit. He took the entire ensemble out to the bedroom in time to see Will pulling up his trousers over a pair of tight briefs. Usually, the omega favored boxers but apparently realized they would leave too distinctive a line with how the suit was cut. Male omega clothing tended to cling to the thighs and rear. His coat was short and fitted to show off his lithe figure.

“So I’m the show pony, and you’re the ringmaster.” He left off a tie, and the top two buttons of his collar were unbuttoned. Normally Hannibal would consider this disapprovingly informal for one of his parties, but this displayed Will’s bite mark in a rather enticing way so he let it go.

“Give yourself some credit, my dear.” Hannibal tucked his shirt into his own trousers, and went over to the dresser to attach his cuff links. “If we are continuing with the circus metaphor, you are at least a tiger.”

Will rolled his eyes, sitting down on the bed to pull his shoes on. “Just don’t try to stick your head in my mouth.”

Hannibal could not help the wicked curl to his lip at that. “I would never presume to do so in company. We’ll wait till after our guests leave.”

Will huffed at him, too stressed about the eminent socializing to have much of a sense of humor. Hannibal finished off his Windsor knot just as the doorbell toned, indicating the first guests had arrived. He offered his arm to Will.

“Let the show begin.”

The Party

Chapter Summary

Poor Will, he hates parties so much.

Chapter Notes

Whoo, party chapter finally finished!

I don't know anything about fancy food or dinner parties. I based all the dishes off of the *ahem* "meat" Hannibal got. And I probably got put on some sort of government watch list for some of the searches I did researching this. So I don't know if any of this would actually go well together or not. If you want the recipes for any of it, I could probably find it again for you if you ask. Please use actual animal meat.

Also, some important update stuff in the end notes, so read those. I mean if you want, no one is gonna force you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will was aware that Hannibal was a glacier of a man, multifaceted with most of his true self hidden deep. So he really should not have been as surprised as he was to have a new side revealed. He had thought of Hannibal as a showman before, but this, this wasn't just Hannibal performing. This was *puppetry* .

The fifty or so guests that Hannibal had invited orbited around the man like he was the sun. He radiated a charismatic energy that drew them, but held them at bay with an air of impenetrable mystery. The result kept everyone vibrating in place with giddy tension, held taut on his strings until he deigned to pull them. And pull them he did, he worked the room taking care to speak to everyone while somehow always remaining the center of attention. A well placed quip or profound metaphor had everyone shining with delight, nodding their rich, glittering heads and raising their crystal glasses at his delicate manipulations.

If Hannibal's guests were marionettes, then Will was a ventriloquist dummy, mouth forced into a rictus grin while Hannibal presented him to the eager crowd. Hannibal speaking through Will as everyone enjoyed *amuse bouche* of pâté and sweetbreads in the sitting room. Normally, Will would be fine to let Hannibal take on the brunt of human interaction, but there was something that didn't sit quite right with him about the way Hannibal was introducing him to this careful selection of Baltimore's upper crust. It was like he was a prop in Hannibal's play. No, worse than that, he was on display. He was one of Hannibal's *oddities* .

Another in the collection of curios that Hannibal used to set the theatre of his house, like the obscure instruments and insect collections. Really, who the hell played the theremin? Will's quip about being a show pony didn't seem quite so funny now. Not while he was being presented as Hannibal's latest acquisition.

Then after establishing Will as a brainless piece of arm candy (which Will would find hilarious if he wasn't currently pissed off), Hannibal abandons Will to the crowd while he goes to make sure the dinner is ready. There is a lull in the conversation as Hannibal leaves the room, taking that electric energy with him. Will is momentarily afraid that his limbs will give out on him, and he'll tumble to the floor like a real puppet. The well-heeled crowd suddenly looked a lot more like a circling pack of vultures. Three opportunistic women swooped in on him.

Will never understood why people felt that they had the right to ask overly personal questions of omegas and beta women. These women were virtual strangers to Will, and he doubted particularly close friends of Hannibal since the alpha didn't appear to have any true confidants.

"So, William, tell us how you met Hannibal." The dark haired beta woman asking seemed to be the ringleader of the group. She was what Will thought people referred to as 'a woman of a certain age' which from what he gathered meant middle aged women who didn't want to admit they were middle age. To her credit, she did not try to dress as if she was still in her twenties, though the flowing red dress she had on was terrifying by virtue of how much it cost.

The two omega women with her were decked out in equally opulent attire. At least it looked that way to Will's untrained eye. One of the omegas was younger than the other two women and had a vaguely hungry look to her, her eyes constantly flicking to the leader trying to emulate her. The other seemed secretly amused by something and was watching Will like he was a wounded prey animal.

Will had known girls like this group in high school. It wasn't a comfort to think that human nature didn't change much after adolescence. Snooty rich girls that looked down on him because he was weird and poor. That he was an omega and therefore a possible threat to the dating pool made them dislike him even further. Alphas and omegas together only made up about 10% of the population and male omegas made up only 1% of that number. So only about one in a thousand people were male omegas. This caused some to view them as exotic and there was quite a bit fetishization of the gender. In high school, Will kept his head down and tried to be invisible. It helped a lot that he was a 'late bloomer' as Hannibal had called him and didn't put off a very strong scent until he reached his first heat.

Now, though, there was no escaping from the women without being rude, and he knew Hannibal had strong Views about rudeness.

"We met in New Orleans while Hannibal was guest teaching down there." There. He didn't sound too much like he wanted to throw himself off a cliff. He even managed to look the woman in the face if not the eye.

“Oh, were you a student of his?” The woman’s eyes gleamed at the idea of a possible scandal. Will knew that she would have never asked the same question of Hannibal.

“No. I worked at a library.” It was enough of a misdirect to allow them to draw their own conclusions. He couldn’t very well tell them that they had met when they’d killed three men who were attacking Will. This line of questioning was dropped anyway since the ladies weren’t getting any juicy details.

“A librarian? How nice.” The older omega, whose hair was towering and improbably red spoke in a rolling purr. “Are you working here in Baltimore now?”

Well, that was an easy enough trap to sidestep. “I’m attending college. I just finished my first semester at John Hopkins.”

A few other guests stopped pretending they weren’t listening in on the conversation and drifted over to the group. Will felt trapped in what was supposed to be his home. Where the hell had Hannibal gotten to? He fielded more questions about his studies, how he was liking Baltimore, and his hobbies. It really was more of an barely concealed interrogation than a conversation. He could get through this, it was just answering questions.

He tried to turn himself inward and consider what to say. It helped distract him from the onslaught of strangers’ emotions. He could feel the amalgamation of their personalities pressing against him. If he wasn’t careful he’d get overwhelmed. Panic flitted at the edges of his consciousness. He took a deep breath, trying to ignore the collection of perfumes, colognes, and individual scents that came with it. Since Hannibal had first mentioned it, he’d been practicing mental exercises. Building forts to keep people out and developing a safe place he could go. He did this now, mentally shutting the others out and imagining himself in a calmly flowing stream, fishing.

Unfortunately this is when the first woman to speak to him decided she could increase the personal nature of her questions.

“So can we be expecting a little bundle of joy anytime soon?” Her coy question was smug, she knew she’d finally asked the question to trip Will up.

"Um. I-I…” The first answer that came to mind was ‘Hell, no’, but he obviously couldn’t say that in polite company. In fact any negative answer he gave would make it sound like he didn’t like children. There was still the prominent societal pressure on those capable of bearing children, too, that they needed to do so or they were failing as a person. Will really wished he didn’t have to be civil to these people. He’d give them quite the earful about outdated gender expectations. Who did this woman think she was anyway? What business of hers was it if he and Hannibal decided to have pups?

Heat rushed to his ears and he struggled to come up with a response. Crap, how long had he been floundering? It occurred to him that if he didn’t answer they might conclude he was already in the family way. Pregnancy scent often didn’t show up until late in the first trimester. Oh fuck, he needed to say something. All of the eyes on him seemed to bore straight through him, and he felt the urge to wrap his arms around his midsection to keep them from staring at it. That would just make it look even more like he was pregnant. Why

hadn't he grabbed a drink when he had the chance? Oh, right. He was still underage. Who got pregnant at 19? Then again, who bonded at 19? Shit, he was coming off as some hick teenage gold digger, wasn't he?

"Is there a problem, my dear?" A familiar arm wrapped around his waist. Will turned instinctively toward Hannibal's body, even as he frowned up at him. The alpha looked amused at Will's discomfort.

"Oh, I believe my question embarrassed your omega." The woman sounded far too delighted about her achievement. Will gritted his teeth at the phrase 'your omega'. He really disliked this woman. He hoped he wouldn't have to see her again after this party.

"I was just wondering if you two planned on having children." Of course when she was talking to Hannibal, she'd phrase it nicely.

"We have suspended that decision until Will has finished his education." A simple answer. Why the hell couldn't he think of that? How soon would all these people leave?

"If you'll forgive the interruption. Dinner is ready." Hannibal led the way into the dining room, which had a different, longer table set up to accommodate all the guest. Will was the first seated, Hannibal pulling out the chair to the right of the head of the table. Everyone else had hand written placards indicating their places. Once everyone was settled, Hannibal motioned for the servers to enter. They paused briefly as Hannibal introduced each dish, allowing the exquisitely prepared food to be admired. Applause broke out as everyone fawned over the artistic plating. Even Will had to admit it all looked and smelled amazing. He ate Hannibal's cooking everyday, but the man had truly outdone himself now. The man in question graciously accepted the praise, and an expectant silence fell over the guests as he raised a glass.

"My sincere thanks to all who made this feast possible. As we come to the close of another year, we consider the sacrifices of the past and plan the achievements of the future. To my husband," he tilted his head to Will, who just managed to keep from ducking under the table, "with whom I plan to share both. *Salud y amor y tiempo para disfrutarlo*."

Will frowned into his water glass as they all took a sip. There was something lurking under the surface of that toast. He turned it over in his head as the food was served.

The first course was a soup called Czarnina served over wild rice. The entree was pork tenderloin cooked in zinfandel served with roast rainbow potatoes and meat filled cabbage rolls. Then a colorful winter salad with a lemony vinaigrette dressing. The main course was braised rosemary lamb shanks on top of a bed of kale simmered in coconut milk, with thin strips of what Hannibal referred to as Heart on Fire arranged beside the lamb. In lieu of a cheese course, there was mint sorbet that helped considerably in cutting the burn left by the Heart of Fire. Dessert was *granita di caffe con panna* , which Will discovered was a type of coffee parfait.

Conversation was fairly quiet throughout dinner as everyone rightfully turned their attention to the food. Will watched Hannibal out of the corner of his eye. The alpha sat at the head of the table like a king observing his court. There was an understated element to his expression

that Will had not seen before and could not quite place. He thought he had gotten better over the last few months in reading the minuscule differences in Hannibal's limited affect, but he was not sure now. If he had to guess, he would have to say Hannibal looked...smug?

Will considered his plate, toying with his fork. Hannibal had a way of speaking where every word was rife with hidden meanings. Having a conversation with him was like trying to solve a puzzle cube, one needed to consider multiple sides and turn the words over and slot them into new places. It was actually one of the things Will likes about talking with Hannibal. Their interactions were challenging and exciting, but there was something dark roiling under the surface here that was making the omega nervous. No one else seemed to notice.

He took a bite of lamb and glanced at Hannibal again only to see the alpha looking back at him, a spark of fire flaring in his gaze as Will swallowed. Their eyes held, Will silently questioning. The corner of Hannibal's lip turning up in one of his not-smiles, but there was definitely an air of satisfaction to it as if he was pulling off some great trick. Will broke contact first, grabbing his water glass and taking a sip, still feeling Hannibal's eyes on him. He avoided looking back for the rest of the meal.

The guests took their after dinner coffee or libation and spread out through the front rooms, the atmosphere was more relaxed now with everyone filled with food and drink, waiting to ring in the New Year. A mellow yet cheerful classical piece played in the background. Hannibal kept one arm tight around Will's waist, a brandy in his other hand as he chatted with another male alpha who was the head of the board of something or other. Truth be told, all the titles were starting to run together in Will's mind.

"Terrible business the other day with those murders. Right before the holidays no less." The other alpha said.

"The spirit of the season can arouse a variety of reactions within us. A celebration of life in the midst of darkness to some, a reminder of bitterness and pain for others. We can only imagine what motivates this killer." Hannibal took a sip of his drink. They stood near to the fireplace in the sitting room, which crackled with cedar logs.

"What murders?" It was the first time Will had voluntarily joined a conversation since the party started, curiosity driving him. He hadn't been keeping up with the news while on break. The man related the triple homicide in a hushed voice that didn't manage to cover up his macabre enthusiasm of the horrific subject.

"I wonder if the police have any leads yet?" Will said, breaking into the other man's detailed description of the murder scene.

"Nothing that they've admitted to the public yet, but that's nothing unusual."

"Freddie Lounds seems convinced that it's The Ripper's work." Hannibal contributed. His weight shifted against Will's infinitesimally. Will tilted his head to look at him.

"That TattleCrime reporter? Doesn't seem like the most reliable source." Hannibal had admitted that reading trashy tabloids was something of a guilty pleasure. Well, he said they were psychologically and sociologically fascinating. Will thought he was just making

excuses. He was particularly fond of the TattleCrime site and Will had caught him reading it on his tablet more than once. Will had even given it a look over himself out of curiosity but found the blatant sensationalism tasteless.

“The theory doesn’t hold up. Everyone knows the Ripper kills three in a row. He’s never killed this many at once before.” The other alpha said. He would have gone on, but his wife came to collect him, putting an end to the conversation.

The Chesapeake Ripper got talked about a lot in his classes. The area seemed weirdly proud of having a prolific unknown serial killer on the loose. Will had to admit to some morbid interest of his own in serial killers. There was something darkly fascinating to him about their minds, what drove them to kill in such specific ways, over and over. The Ripper was particularly interesting because no one knew how he chose his victims. They spanned genders, races, and ages (though, to date they had never found evidence of a child Ripper victim). The way the bodies were displayed varied as much as the victims. That was really what drew the public’s attention, the strange elegant brutality of the killer. It was horrible, yes, but it was different, it was almost art.

Something about that thought clicked into place deep within Will’s mind, but before he could examine it anymore closely, the grandfather clock in the hallway began to toll out, signalling midnight.

“It’s a new year, Will,” Hannibal murmured, giving him a short kiss, “I wonder what it holds for us.”

“God only knows.” Will muttered back.

Hannibal quirked an eyebrow. “I believe we make our own fates. Even if God does know the paths of our lives, we should not wait on Him to guide us through the woods.”

“So what’s the point of God then?” Will was not a particularly religious person, but growing up in the Bible belt had left something of an impression on him.

“Does God need a point?” Hannibal queried back. Will didn’t have an answer to that so he just turned away as a few of the more merry guests started a rendition of *Auld Lang Syne* .

Chapter End Notes

> This fic will be going on a shortish hiatus until May. I'm participating in Camp NaNoWriMo (http://campnanowrimo.org for those interested) in April so I am going to be directing my attention to outlining for that the rest of this month and working on the actual story next month. I AM COMING BACK TO THIS FIC, it's just going on the back burner for a bit. But hey, the new story I'm going to do is pretty much a Hannibal AU idea I had that got out of hand so I might post it too when it's done. Hope you guys enjoyed this chapter, I'll get back to you in May!

The Waiting Game

Chapter Summary

Hannibal watches Will work his way closer to the truth.

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone! It's been a while. Camp NaNoWriMo went...ok I suppose. I was doing a Hannibal fantasy fic. I haven't finished that yet, but I may edit and post what I have so far up. I am continuing this story as planned, and I am also working on a short Hannigram mythological work that I should put up fairly soon. Once that is done, I'm considering doing a series of one-shots from a huge list of AU prompts I've collected. What do you all think?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal had expected a thorough scolding for his actions during the party, or at least a demand for explanation. To his bemusement, neither was forthcoming. Instead, Will seemed to withdraw into himself, not that he was particularly open in the first place. Hannibal could feel his mate’s unease through their bond. He spent more time playing with Winston, braving the New England winter. He conspicuously focused on his studies as he began the new semester, often ignoring Hannibal if he was in the room. He would respond if spoken to but no longer initiated conversation. At night in bed, his mate pulled away from him and feigned sleep.

Hannibal considered provoking a more revealing response but decided to hold off. Despite his current aloofness, Hannibal had more than once noticed Will watching him intently with a glint of new awareness in his eyes. He could tell his mate was on the precipice of discovery, evoking a rising anticipation within the alpha that only a hunt could usually bring about. Hannibal understood the virtue of patience. The pieces were in place, he just had to wait for his clever boy to put them together.

Will’s twentieth birthday came in mid January. At the omega’s insistence, they spent the evening in, eating fish that Will had caught while ice fishing the previous weekend. Will stiltedly thanked him for preparing the meal but said nothing more.The silence between them was no longer comfortable. Instead there was a current of tension that Hannibal knew he would not be the one to break. Will held off until dessert before he gives way over Italian creme cake.

“How is your class going?” It’s a weak opener, Will imperceptibly winces at the banality, but Hannibal gracefully accepts it as a suitable olive branch.

“I have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of students in comparison to courses I have taught in the past. There is one doctoral student in particular I believe has significant potential.”

“That-that’s good.”

“And how have been enjoying your own studies?”

“They are certainly enlightening. Especially my abnormal psychology course.”

Hannibal’s lips quirked. “Yes, I that one tends to be engrossing to newcomers. Tell me, have you begun diagnosing yourself?”

Will snorted, his tone turning sardonic. “I’ve had enough of that from other people.”

“It must be refreshing to do the psychoanalyzing yourself for once.”

“I don’t think attending a few weeks of a 200 level course authorizes me to diagnose anyone.”

“I would recommend you with minimal education over some so called professionals in my field.”

“We’ve been discussing psychopaths and sociopaths.” He said somewhat abruptly.

Hannibal sipped from a cup of chamomile tea, he felt coffee would be to heavy with their dessert. “A fascinating if macabre topic. Once one learns to recognize the symptoms, it becomes almost impossible to not see signs in everyone you meet.”

“I hadn’t realized there was such distinction between the two.”

“A fault of the media, I expect. The terms are often used interchangeably usually just to write off a person who is violent for seemingly no reason. And there is much discussion within the psychiatric community on what exactly delineates one from the other.”

“And what’s your professional opinion?” Will’s eyes flickered upward, meeting Hannibal’s for the first time since New Year’s.

Setting his teacup down, he pursed his lips musing upon the best answer that would keep their game moving along but not give too much away. “As I’m sure you learned in your class, both terms have their roots in antisocial personality disorder. This is characterized by a general disregard for laws, social mores, and the rights of others, as well as a lack of remorse for any actions. One major difference between the two is origin of affliction. Sociopaths are created through childhood trauma and abuse whereas psychopaths are simply born monsters.”

“Nature vs nurture? That’s really what it boils down to?” The omega sounded skeptical.

“There are a few other differences. Sociopaths tend to be more impulsive and aggressive, and as such have difficulty holding down jobs and maintaining relationships. They congregate at the edges of society and yet are considered two have more of a conscience than their counterpart. Psychopaths are much harder to pinpoint. They are manipulative, charming, and meticulous. An intelligent psychopath can put on a perfectly respectable persona, have relationships, be successful in their chosen career, and yet have absolutely no empathy or remorse. Psychopaths are not crazy, they are fully aware of what they do and the consequences of those actions.”

“And they look normal.” Will leaned back in his chair, eyes glued to the other man.

“To the untrained eye.”

“But not all psychopaths are violent.”

“And not all those that commit violence are psychopaths. Everyone is capable of violence, William.”

“Everyone has thought of killing someone, one way or another.” He murmured.

“Some of us have gone beyond thought.”

The words hung in the air between them. The unspoken weight of their bloody introduction. They had never spoken of it since they had bonded. Hannibal studied his mate imagining the synapses firing in his brain. His face was near unreadable and the alpha wondered idly if the younger man had picked up the habit from him. It was likely, Will had a tendency to unconsciously reflect other’s postures and mannerisms.

“Do you feel regret?” He posed.

“Do you?” Will shot back.

“A life without regret would be no life at all.” This seemed to take Will aback. Hannibal smiled fully at his bemusement. The small celebration highlighted how very young his mate was. It was easy to forget sometimes. Hannibal suspected that Will had what was colloquially referred to as an ‘old soul’, but his youth still managed to make itself painfully obvious at times.

Hannibal stood and cleared the remaining dishes. “I will finish cleaning up, then I have a present for you.”

Will blushed slightly. “You didn’t have to get me anything.”

Hannibal did not even bother to dignify that with a response. In truth, he was planning something much more elaborate than a set of first edition Jack London novels for their upcoming anniversary. Perhaps this time his perceptive mate will even recognize it for the gift it is.

Chapter End Notes

BTW thanks so much to everyone who's commented and left kudos! Ya'll make me feel so loved <3

Someone Help Will Graham

Chapter Summary

So you married a psychopath...

Chapter Notes

I am on a roll today! Hopefully I'll get the next chapter posted up by tomorrow.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will had a problem. Actually he had several, but the majority could be traced back to the same source, Hannibal. Who was a psychopath. In all honesty, Will couldn't say he was all that surprised to come to this conclusion. He had known that there was something off about the man, the ease with which he had transformed two living men into cooling corpses was a big clue. But his inner omega always felt safe with Hannibal so he ignored what logic was telling him. Considering what he know knew, it made sense that he had never felt anything from their bond. Hannibal likely didn't have the emotional ability to feel strongly enough for Will to pick up on it.

The problem was not that Hannibal had the moral compass of a prowling wolf. Will couldn't blame him for being born a certain way. The man had never shown any inclination of violence toward him. Though in retrospect, the other man's emotional manipulation was glaringly obvious. He wasn't really sure how to best approach that issue. To begin with, he really wasn't sure why Hannibal had bonded with him in the first place. It was something he had wondered about before, but he had held onto the foolish hope that it was because Hannibal had some measure of affection for him. Perhaps it was simply instinctual? Will knew that a big component of attraction actually had to do with biological imperatives more than "real" feelings whatever that meant. Maybe their bond was upheld by nothing more than genetic compatibility. His stupid omega brain saw an apex predator and decided that it wanted to have his babies. God, he hated own mind sometimes.

What Will's main problem at the moment was he had no idea what he was supposed to do with this information. It's not like he could just leave the alpha. They were bonded, and he had no doubt that his mate would track him down. Where would he even go? So Will was stuck in a limbo of indecision, closely watching his mate for...something. More and more lately he chided himself for being ridiculous. He had known Hannibal for almost a year, was he really expecting him to suddenly whip out an axe and start hacking people up? He reminded himself that all psychopaths weren't violent. Look at Wall Street, he was fairly

certain a majority of those men were psychopaths and they (probably) weren't going around slicing people up. He had maybe read American Psycho too many times.

And yet… Will knew for a fact that Hannibal was a murderer. So was Will. They had killed those alphas, and while it had been defense he couldn't get the image of Hannibal's unruffled demeanor out of his head. The way he had sliced the one's throat was...experienced. Of course he had been an emergency room surgeon, Will rationalized. There was no reason to think that the ordeal had been anything more than a one time event. The papers had written it off as a dominance fight, and maybe that's all it was. An alpha with no moral quandaries and a ruthless competence easily overcame the lesser rivals and claimed the omega prize. It soured Will's stomach to think of it in those terms, but looking at the situation from an evolutionary point of view it made sense. And it supported his theory that the act of violence was a behavior outlier. There was just one small thing still niggling at him. What had Hannibal been doing out there in the first place?

It was difficult to focus on his classes with such thoughts weighing heavy on his mind. Especially since his abnormal psychology professor seemed to have centered the entire first half of the course around violent crimes committed by the mentally ill. Will guessed that's what happens when you normally worked at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Chilton, like Hannibal was a guest professor, but privately Will thought Hannibal was certainly a far superior teacher. Chilton was pompous and unpleasant, condescending to the students and borderline mocking them when they gave wrong answers. Will sat next to Beverly in class and they had invented a code of communicating through exchanged exasperated glances at the insufferable man's teaching. A beta with an alpha complex is what she had called him. Little dick syndrome was Price's diagnosis.

The man bustled into class late one day in mid February. This was unusual because the man had a pretty stringent tardy policy and seemed to enjoy throwing students out who didn't show up on time. Nevertheless the man hurried to the podium, a sort of unholy glee in his eyes.

"I am terribly sorry I am late, class, but I think you will forgive me when I share why. You see, I have new exclusive information that I believe will be of great interest to you all. Last night, I was asked to help consult by the behavioral science unit of the FBI on a recent murder which they believe may have been committed by…" and here he paused for dramatic effect. "The Chesapeake Ripper."

An excited whispering broke out in the lecture hall. Beverly shot Will an incredulous look.

"No way that slimeball got called on a Ripper case." She said in an undertone. Will shrugged, leaning forward to watch the professor set a powerpoint up on his computer.

"Now, normally, I would be unable to share the details of an ongoing investigation, but somehow the website Tattle Crime has managed to upload photos of the scene so with the information already out there, I feel it would be prudent to give you all a first hand glimpse into how an abnormal mind functions."

"We've been getting that all semester," Beverly whispered into his ear. Will had to bite back a chuckle.

Chilton picked up his slide clicker. “Now I must warn you that the pictures in today’s presentation are extremely graphic. Those of you with a delicate constitution may want to look away.” He switched slides with relish and a massive picture of a mutilated body appeared on screen. There was a collective gasp from the audience. Will distantly heard a few people gag, but it was drown out by the rushing in his ears.

Time stopped, and turned backward. The dead man’s eyes flew open and he struggled. Blood flowed back into his wounds. The implements piercing him were removed one by one until he was whole again. Then he was still, alive but unconscious. Then time started again, and Will was part of the scene.

I wait for the drug to wear off, standing over the pig, a master at a blank canvas. I have no real connection to the man. He does not know who I am or why I have chosen him, but it does not matter. He knows in this moment that he is nothing. He should be grateful. I am letting him become more. I am transforming him into art. He is alive while I carefully insert the tools into his flesh, taking care not to puncture anything vital. He screams and screams, but I am unfazed. No one will hear him. I remove his liver and stitch him neatly back up so as not to unbalance the symmetry of the work. He is weak now from blood loss, but can still feel pain. I watch him die slowly, adjusting the tools when his spasms jolt them out of place. I take a moment to admire my work. This is not a random occurrence, no act of passion. There is intention here. This is my design.

That thought jolts Will out of the strange revere he had fallen into. He finds that he is breathing hard and soaked in sweat. Beverly is looking at him in concern. At the front of the lecture hall, Chilton is droning on about the significance of the Wound Man and what the Ripper’s motives in recreating it were.

“Do you need to go? I can give you my notes later.” Beverly said. Will nodded, quickly gathering his things and slipping out.

Once in his car, Will sits back and tries to process what just happened. He had been in the mind of the killer. His palms itched as if he could still feel the phantom weight of the tools. Will knew that his imagination could be more vivid than the average person’s, but nothing like this had ever happened before. He *knew* the Ripper in a profound way. Or at least it felt like he did. His head ached. Without consciously deciding to, he found himself driving to Hannibal’s office.

He felt a little foolish as he pushed open the door to the client waiting area. He didn’t even know if Hannibal was free right now, but he immediately felt better at the alpha’s familiar scent. The door to the office opened before he had a chance to sit down.

“Will.” He sounded concerned. “My last patient just left and I was about to call you. I felt some distress through the bond.”

“Oh, sorry. I didn’t mean to distract you. It was dumb.”

“I cannot imagine anything that would upset you so to be dumb. Please, come in.”

Hannibal stood back to let him into his office. Will had been there a few times before but had never had much of a chance to look around. Hannibal placed a hand on the back of his neck, and he hated how content that made him feel.

“Do you want to talk about what happened?”

“I freaked out over nothing. It’s fine.” Will extracted himself to wander around the room, avoiding looking at Hannibal.

“If it was nothing, Will, it wouldn’t have bothered you.” Hannibal sat down in what was obviously “his chair” and crossed his legs, watching his mate attentively.

Even from the corner of his eye he could see the curiosity behind his concerned facade. It was slightly easier to read Hannibal now that he knew where the edges of his mask lay. While the majority of the emotions he presented were fabricated, his curiosity was always genuine. Hannibal found people interesting in the same way a cat might find a bug interesting. The thought flitted through Will’s mind if that might not be the reason Hannibal kept him. He was a curiosity. He filed that away for later.

“Isn’t it against some regulation to psychoanalyze your spouse, Doctor?” Will stopped by a small statuette of a black elk. What was it made of, iron?

“Not if the spouse in question is refusing to communicate.”

“Hmm.” Hannibal had a drawing desk here, too. When did he have time to draw at work? Will picked up a few of his drawings that were sitting there. He glanced at the one on top, and froze.

“Hannibal.” Will’s voice was strained. He sensed more than heard Hannibal come up behind him. The alpha’s hand brushed his throat.

“Why do you have a drawing of me sitting naked on a rock?”

“It is an, admittedly rough, reproduction of the Herman Smorenburg painting Mysteries of the Sea.”

“But why am I in it?”

“I thought the innocent sexuality combined with the natural setting was a fitting theme for you.”

“What if one of your patients saw it?”

“They would have no way of knowing it was you, and even if they did, I am sure they would simply be green with envy of my lovely mate.”

Will blushed. “That’s not the point, Hannibal! It-it’s inappropriate.”

“I see nothing inappropriate about the nude human form. It is hardly an explicit drawing.” Damn, Hannibal sounded amused at Will’s outrage.

“This coming from a man who thinks Leda and the Swan should be hung in the dining room.” Will grumbled, shuffling to the next drawing which, thankfully, was a sketch of a chapel.

“William.” Hannibal sounded chiding now. His hand slipped down to rest on Will’s waist. The omega shivered, keenly aware they had not been intimate in quite a while. “You came to my office for a reason.”

Will sighed and flipped through the other drawings “It was just a photo that Chilton showed in class today. It kind of...disturbed...me…” Will trailed off as he got to the last picture in the stack. It was a graphite replica of the very thing he was describing. Though the man’s face, instead of being slack with death, was twisted in agony.

Chapter End Notes

This is a link to the painting mentioned in the chapter: http://hermansmorenburg.exto.org/kunstwerk/226144576_Mysteries+of+the+sea.html#.WSoWdVTyvIU

What Do You See?

Chapter Summary

A conversation fraught with peril.

Chapter Notes

So if I ever say I'm updating on a specific day, just assume I'm lying. I couldn't stick to a schedule if my life depended on it.
Also, Hannibal chapters will always take longer because I find him harder to write than Will. BUT I have outlined for the rest of this fic, so I now know how this bitch is gonna end. We got some drama coming up, but I think we're on the downward slope.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal could smell the sudden fear rolling off of Will. He fancied if he tilted his head he would hear the fast beat of his heart, like a fluttering bird trying to escape his chest. He couldn't deny a slight uptick in his own pulse as well as every sense came alight as he focused on his mate.

He threaded the fingers of one hand through his husband's curls, pressing the other against his lower abdomen, waiting for the other man's reaction.

He wasn't sure how Will had connected the drawing with the current Ripper victim, but something had obviously clicked in his mind, a piece of the puzzle slotting into place to reveal the a recognizable picture. Hannibal gripped his hair tighter. He had been waiting for this moment and was breathless to see what Will would do.

"So I take it you've already seen today's Tattle Crime." Will let go of the drawing and it floated back down to the desk. Hannibal paused imperceptibly, before answering smoothly.

"I know you find such sensationalism distasteful." He let go of Will and gathered up the loose drawings, tucking them into a file to be stowed in the desk drawer. "Does your former perturbation has something to do with the murder?"

"You could say that." Hannibal waited, but Will didn't elaborate, instead turning away and walking back across the office to the chaise lounge. "I can't believe you have an actual therapist couch. Do your patients really lie on it?"

“Some find the reclining position allows for more emotional openness due to the implied vulnerability of the pose. Though aesthetics was my main motivation for choosing that piece. Most of my patients prefer to sit across from me.”

“They are already showing their vulnerability just by being here. The chairs just give the illusion of equality.” The way Will said *vulnerability* made it sound like *weakness* .

Hannibal raised an eyebrow. “Everyone approaches therapy in their own way.” He sat back down in his usual spot, an unspoken challenge to the omega. Will hesitated, then lowered himself into the opposite chair.

“Is this the part where you ask how I feel?” Will’s mouth twisted wryly.

“It would do little good when I do not know the reason for the emotions.”

“You’re like a dog with a bone.”

“Fortunately for me, you are quite fond of dogs.” Hannibal enjoyed the way Will’s nose wrinkles at the rejoinder. He probed at their bond, wanting to know what was going on in that unique mind, but Will was keeping him blocked off. Whatever was roiling beneath the omega’s stony demeanor, the other man didn’t want him to know. Which of course made Hannibal even more fascinated. Breaking open his stubborn little mate was a challenge he looked forward to.

The silence between them was more loaded than their previous estrangement. The sharpened points of Will’s suspicion and Hannibal’s curiosity held them in stalemate. They regarded each other across the short space. The doctor could not help but notice how well Will fit in the space. His office was designed, much like his home, with the intent to emphasis his status. But Will, scruffy, dog haired cover Will who still insisted on wearing flannel despite Hannibal’s attempts at dressing him properly, was the first person to ever sit across from him and meet his gaze as an equal.

“We were discussing the latest supposed Ripper murder in my class today. Chilton showed some...graphic...photos of the crime scene.”

“The Wound Man murder? I did not think Frederick was a patron of Tattle Crime.”

“Most people wouldn’t think you were a regular reader either. But apparently he was asked to help with the profile, and since the pictures were put up anyway, he turned it into a ‘learning moment’.”

“And did you learn from it?”

Hannibal could not decipher the look that crossed Will’s face. There was something hard edged and sharp in it.

“It was very informative.”

Hannibal considered. It was a risk but he could not help but ask, “What were your impressions?” This was the first time Will had actually observed his work. What had the

perceptive omega seen in it?

Will's attention turned inward, expression smoothing out into a blank slate. "Of the scene?" He considered. "It was a display."

"Displaying one's enemies after death has its appeals in many cultures."

Will scoffed. "He wasn't the Ripper's enemy, he was a pest to be swatted."

Hannibal tilted his head, intrigued by the certainty in the other man's voice.

"The dissections are to disgrace them. It's a public shaming." Oh, his clever, clever boy. He had seen it right away where the police, FBI, and a whole swath of experts had failed. Will saw right to the heart.

"Takes their organs away because in his mind, they don't deserve them." Hannibal all but confirmed it for him.

"In some way. But who they are isn't important. They are just...material. The base elevated into art."

Hannibal wants to touch Will, to hold his face in his hands, peel back his skin and skull, and watch the synapses in his brain fire. He wants to see his mate, bloodstained, sitting upon a throne of bones, wreathed in thorns and flowers. He has to fight the urge to reach for him so he could sink his teeth into his neck, opening up their mating mark. He cannot stop the pheromones he is putting out into the room. The eyes that watch Will shift in his chair are predatory. The omega is aware of his alpha's interest, but it's either on a subconscious level or Will is ignoring it. Hannibal cannot resist pushing him.

"How do you see him?" His voice is a low rumble, his accent thicker.

"The Ripper?" Will murmured, sounding almost intimate. The doctor doesn't respond, waiting.

The words came slowly, falling heavily between them. "He looks *normal* and nobody can tell what he is."

The pheromones cut off abruptly like a dose of cold water. Hannibal narrows his eyes, and Will looks placidly back. Neither of them acknowledge the lie.

Chapter End Notes

Anyone else hyped for the 'In the Kitchen With Hannibal' show that hulu's doing this fall? Cause I super am!

Bedroom Brawl

Chapter Summary

The boys celebrate their anniversary in an unusual way.

Chapter Notes

TW: THIS IS THE NONCON CHAPTER! If that is something that bothers you, please do not read.

The theme song for this chapter is Bruises and Bitemarks by Good With Grenades, which is also where the chapter title comes from.

Hannibal has asked to bring a guest to dinner. Well, asked is not really the term. He told Will that he had invited someone to dinner, but phrases it as a question as if Will had any say. Will isn't sure why Hannibal even bothers disguising his orders anymore. The alpha has gotten awfully overbearing lately. Will is too busy walking on eggshells and dancing around his suspicions to call him out on it. His skin feels too tight and itchy the whole day. So he is not in the best of moods as he put on a dark green button up shirt and black slacks in preparation to meet whoever was coming.

The doorbell rings and Hannibal calls from the kitchen for Will can answer it. Peering through the peephole, he sees a pretty brunette woman not much older than him. He opens the door. Her sweet scent, slightly enhanced by a light perfume, marks her as another omega.

"Hi! You must be Will. I'm Alana Bloom, Dr. Lecter has sort of been mentoring me this semester."

"Oh, nice to meet you. Come in, Hannibal's just plating the food."

He leads her through to the dining room, where the table has already been laid. He is unsure of the appropriate etiquette toward another omega, but it feels polite to pull her chair out for her.

"Uh-I'll just go check to see if Hannibal needs any help." He awkwardly scurries into the kitchen.

"Ah, Will. I take it you made our guest comfortable?" Hannibal hands him a tray with three tall beer glasses.

“Yes.” What the hell was that even suppose to mean? Should he offer her a blanket or something?

“I will be out in a moment with the first course, if you will go ahead and serve the drinks. I know Alana prefers beer to wine.”

“Alright.” He wonders how Hannibal knows that. How much time had the two spent together? There is a strange sensation in his stomach, a dull burn that makes him want to smash the beer glasses in Hannibal’s stupid face.

“Drink?” He asks Alana as he goes back into the dining room. He sets the other two in front of Hannibal and his own places. He is sitting across from her on Hannibal’s right, his usual spot. He sits down, avoiding the woman’s eyes. She takes a sip of her beer.

“This is really good.”

“Hannibal, among his many other culinary pursuits, does some brewing, too.”

“Wow. I know he said he likes cooking, but I didn’t realize how much he put into it.”

Her lack of knowledge about Hannibal’s passion eases the jealousy a bit. If she didn’t know one of the most basic things about Hannibal, then he probably had nothing to worry about. He mentally slaps himself for that thought. He has plenty to worry about. Possible infidelity is really the least of his problems.

“Well, you are in for a treat, then. He is very passionate about food.”

“Thank you, Will. I do try.” Hannibal sweeps in on a wave of false modesty, carrying the first course.

Will watches surreptitiously as Alana, wide eyed, takes in the presentation of the food. To her credit, she responds gracefully, and does not stumble over which utensil to use. She complements the food, but doesn’t gush.

“How's college treating you so far, Will?” She asks between bites.

“I’m enjoying my classes for the most part. I know it will become more challenging later on.”

“If you ever need any help, or some dirt on the professors, let me know.” She tipped him a wink. “Sometimes I feel as if I’ve been there forever. I worked as a TA in the psychology department my first four years.”

“Are you going for your doctorate?”

“Yep, in psychiatry. Just have to finish my residency, a whole bunch of papers, and of course my thesis. Then I’ll be ready to go out into the world to beg for a job.”

Despite himself Will smiles. “Will diagnose for cash?”

She laughs. It’s a nice laugh. “Exactly.”

Alana has a way of putting everyone at ease. She is charming and witty. Will can see why Hannibal chose to mentor her. The rest of dinner passes pleasantly, and Will finds he is actually enjoying her company and engaging in the conversation. There is still the tension between himself and Hannibal, but it is in the background of his mind.

It is fairly late when she leaves, and Will is genuinely sorry to see her go. They exchange numbers, and agree to get lunch some day when they are both on campus. Hannibal stands behind him in the doorway, hand on the small of his back as they wave goodbye.

He pulls away once the door shuts, but Hannibal follows caging him against the wall with his presence. He leans forward and runs his nose along Will's neck. Will goes very still. His heart pounds, and not just from fear. This is the closest they have been since New Year's. Will had put up a passive aggressive barrier between them, but Hannibal has apparently decided to lay siege to it tonight.

"What do you think of Ms. Bloom?" He asks against his ear.

"She's nice." Will makes a concentrated effort to keep his voice even.

"I'm glad. I had hoped you'd get along." He puts his hands on Will's hips and pulls him forward. Will gasps at the heat of the alpha's body against his. Hannibal lightly bites over his mating bite. Will's knees go a bit weak.

"Happy anniversary." Hannibal says. Will's world is suddenly turned sideways as he is swept up into an effortless fireman's carry.

Will is outraged. And confused. "Our anniversary is in May!" He tries unsuccessfully to wriggle away, even as his inner omega purrs at the show of strength. He can feel himself becoming slick which makes his face flush.

"Today is the anniversary of the night we met." Will stops his struggles briefly. Hannibal starts to ascend the stairs. Has it really been a whole year? His entire body feels warm and over sensitized. He realizes that this isn't just average arousal. He is going into heat just like he had that night. Except now he has a mate who very well may be a serial killer.

"Hannibal, put me down!"

"In one moment, *mon beau* ." He pushes open the door to their bedroom, and deposits Will on the bed, coming down on top of him and pinning him to the mattress, kissing his neck since Will turns his head away when he tries to capture his lips.

Will shoves against his shoulders. Since he realized it was happening, his heat feels like it is rushing toward him. "Why did you invite Alana over tonight?"

"I thought you would like her."

"What-was she suppose to be my *present* ?" Will sees an opening and slides out from under Hannibal, getting off the side of the bed and pressing himself against the wall. Unfortunately it is the opposite side from the door.

“You don’t have many acquaintances. It would do you good to broaden your social circle.” Hannibal sits up, looking disheveled and predatory. A bit of hair is falling over his brow.

“You can’t give people as gifts!”

“I fail to see why not. You both got along splendidly.” Hannibal removes his shirt. Will’s hind brain lights up with glee even as he starts to edge around the bed.

“I-I really don’t think-”

“Good, now is not the time for thinking.” And there go his pants and underwear. Will gives up on the subtle escape and runs for it. He doesn’t get very far. He is grabbed around the middle, finding himself face down in the duvet.

“Hannibal, don’t!” His pants are stripped off in one move. He’s lost his shoe at some point. Automatically, his traitorous body goes into lordosis position when Hannibal presses a hand into the center of his back. There’s a rip, and his shirt is falling down his arms. Hannibal tore it down the middle of the back. He gets all tangled up in it.

While he is distracted by that, Hannibal grabs his hips, parts his cheeks, and shoves into him. Will’s mouth opens as if in a scream, but no sound comes out, only a whoosh of air as his breath is forced out of his lungs.

It is a painful, invasive stretch even as his body produces slick to ease the way. They have not had sex in weeks, and his body has tightened up. He feels tears form in his eyes, his body instinctively bowing, tilting his pelvis back and lowering his chest and head.

Hannibal drapes himself over his back, hips not moving, just lying there keeping him pinned and crushed into the bedding. The alpha’s heavy member is throbbing inside of him. Teeth find the mating mark and reopen it. Will makes a mewling cry and hates himself for it.

Hannibal begins to move then, not a lot, just a roll of his hips that made Will feel every inch of his organ. Despite himself, pleasure starts to build along Will’s spine, and he shudders into a reluctant orgasm as his mate’s knot stretches him further.

Biting his lip so hard he draws blood, he fists his hands as his body twitches around Hannibal, milking his seed. His fury is a cold ice in his mind surrounded by the heat of his hormone laden body. When at last the knot goes down, Hannibal does not pull out, just rolls them on their sides. His arms come around Will, holding him tight and effectively imprisoning him.

Will stares stonily at his own reflection in the angled mirror across the room. His arms are still trapped in the remains of his shirt, reminding him of a straight jacket. Hannibal raises his head, and their gazes meet in the mirror.

“Why?” Will’s question comes out harsh. If words could cut it would have slashed the alpha’s throat.

The other man's eyes seem to gleam in the low lighting. He presses his cheek against Will's, his late day stubble scraping against his face, leaving his mark there, too.

"Because you are *mine* ." As vicious as the words are, they pour out like melted chocolate. And isn't that Hannibal all over. Brutality hidden by elegance.

Will closes his eyes, unable to bear the sight of him anymore, but it is almost worse because then the feel and scent become so much more intense. He feels the next wave of heat begin to rise in him and he wants to scream and claw and bite. He wants to bring a reckoning of bloody vengeance down on this man, who violated him when he was suppose to care for him. He wants to tear his heart out of his chest just so he can see how black it is.

The alpha thickens inside of him again. Hannibal raises Will's leg, flipping him over somehow without leaving his body. He leans over him in the basic missionary position, thrusting hard into him. Will digs his nail's into his arms as hard as he can and scrapes, leaving bloody furrows. Hannibal throws his head back, groaning. Then he descends upon him, biting and sucking at his bloody lip and pounding wildly into him. They fuck like they are trying to destroy each other. Each peak driving them into a higher frenzy.

The early morning dawn is just starting to creep into the room when Hannibal gets up and leaves him. Will lies limply on the bed, far too sore and wrung out to go anywhere. He is covered with bruises, scratches, and bite marks. He hopes Hannibal looks worse that he does. He caught the doctor in the eye at one point with his forehead and it was turning into a nice shiner.

He is dozing off when Hannibal comes back into the room carrying a tray with sausage and biscuits on it, as well as some sort of delicious smelling tea. Will's stomach rumbles at the smell, but he glares fiercely at Hannibal. Well, as fiercely as someone lying exhausted and naked on a bed can glare.

"Eat, *mylimasis* , you need the strength. Your heat is not over."

Will bares his teeth at Hannibal. "You aren't going to touch me again."

Hannibal smiles truly then, a glint of his own teeth flashing. He sets the tray on the bedside table. Will, despite his soreness, fights hard as his hands are seized and pinned over his head by one of Hannibal's hands. The other travels down his body, tracing from his mating mark to his soft cock. He strokes it gently and it gives a betraying twitch.

"You cannot stop me. My lovely, perfect omega." He bends to take his mouth, and has to jerk back from the savage bite Will aims at his face. He chuckles and grabs a piece of sausage.

"It would be better for you to sink your teeth into this." He slips it between Will's lips before he knows what is happening, he's being hand fed. He subsides his struggles reluctantly because he actually is really hungry. His head is a little clearer once he's full,but his heat is simmering under his skin. Hannibal scents the air near his neck. Will submits passively as he's mounted again. His mind is full of crystal shards, and he begins to plot.

The Calm Before

Chapter Summary

The consequences of his actions are not quite what Hannibal expected.

Chapter Notes

I'm super excited guys, because this fic is officially over my word count goal of 30,000 words. Don't worry, I'm gonna keep at it until the story's finished. I'd say there are probably about 5 more chapters to go. I'm so glad everyone is enjoying it!

Hannibal can not judge the depth of Will's rage. Since his heat, Will hides himself behind a placid mask. He does not comment on what happened. Hannibal is almost completely cut off from their bond, only barely able to sense when Will is near. Despite that, life returns to how it was before New Year's. No, actually that isn't quite true. Things are..different. Will is different. He has turned himself into the picture perfect spouse, right out of Stepford.

He attends social engagements with Hannibal, hanging off his arm and charming everyone. When Hannibal reaches out to him in bed, he accepts him willingly and eagerly. At the dinner table, he speaks of his academic pursuits and inquires about Hannibal's day. The tense undercurrent that plagued them seemingly a thing of the past. Will is a far better actor than Hannibal gave him credit for.

It is the eyes that give him away. They have frozen in an icy blue, deep and unforgiving as an arctic lake. Hannibal is spellbound. He has only glimpsed the darkness in Will once before. Bathed in the yellow light of a street lamp, in the flash of a knife, he spied a feral animal that had been cornered. The same fear and fury that spurred him to open that alpha's throat festered now in the depths of his eyes, barely contained.

Hannibal could admit to himself that his actions during Will's heat had been a bit...impolitic. Will's precipitous discovery had lit a fire within him, setting his senses alight, and making him hyper aware of his mate. The electric, stormy scent of the omega's preheat had sent him into a, controlled, madness. Perhaps it had been impulsive, as he seemed to always be around Will.

He had been somewhat concerned that his behavior sabotaged his efforts at encouraging Will's friendship with Alana, but thankfully, Will's change in attitude to extends to when he is not with Hannibal, too. The two meet for lunch about once a week and occasionally go on

outings. So that pawn is still in play. Assuming Will actually has some semblance of affection for her and is not simply playing the part.

For the most part, he enjoys seeing Will's 'person suit', quite aware that it is modeled, in part after his own. The construction is not quite as meticulous as his own, but in some ways, Hannibal thinks Will's is more convincing. The younger man finally learned to use his gift to his advantage, reading his audience and reflecting back what they want to see. It takes Hannibal a while to identify the warm glow in his chest as pride, *for Will* . It has been a long time since he has felt any such thing for another person.

To the world, their personas present the perfect couple. To each other, they have donned their armor in preparation for their next battle. Hannibal waits for Will's next move. But it is not fast coming. He remains vigilant as weeks pass. He has no doubt that the clever boy is planning something. He knows him too well not to think that he will let Hannibal's actions against him pass unheeded.

Winter slowly relinquishes its grip and spring creeps in quietly, splashing bright spots of color on the landscape. Hannibal transforms another pig in April, one he has been working on for a while. He leaves a land developer stuffed with flowers on a tree in the very place he intended to pave over. Hannibal makes sure Will sees the headline, but his guarded mate does not react. He wonders if the omega noticed that it was set up on the anniversary of their bonding.

Will is late getting back from class one day, Hannibal does not think much of it. He has of late been spending some time outside of school with his study group friends. Then a bottle of heat suppressants appears in the medicine cabinet. Hannibal considers the orange bottle with Will's name on it. Dr. Carmine Garcia, is the prescribing doctor. Hannibal does not know of her, but he certainly will by the next day. Silent war or not, he will not have Will be attended by a sub par gynecologist.

He decides to take a leaf out of Will's book and does not mention the offensive little bottle. Will has made his move, a passive declaration. Now it is Hannibal's turn. He picks up his phone and makes an appointment.

"Hello, Hannibal" Bedelia's voice cool and measured as always comes over the line.

"Bedelia, I was hoping I might beg a favor from you." Not that he is going to do any actual begging. Nor is he actually asking.

"Oh?" He can imagine her eyebrows raising on the other end of the line.

"I have a referral for you." In a manner of speaking.

"I am retired, Hannibal. I know you choose to ignore it, but you are...a special case."

"This is another special case." There is hesitation. Her curiosity warring with her common sense. The former won out as he knew it would. Bedelia could be so predictable. Most people could, in his experience. In fact so far he had only found one...special case.

“Who is it?” She asks. There is a note in her voice that indicates she knows she has lost this particular battle. Walking into the lion’s den with eyes wide open. It is one of the things he likes about Bedilia. She plays with fire, anticipating the burn.

“Will Graham.” There is an in drawn breath and a much longer pause. He hears her exhale slowly.

“What are you doing, Hannibal?” It is a rhetorical question. She does not truly want to know, the answers frighten her too much.

“Shall we say Friday at 5 o’clock?”

“If it must happen.”

“I think it must.”

“I shall await his arrival, then.”

“Thank you, Bedilia. I look forward to hearing your assessment.”

“It is unethical to discuss a patient, Hannibal.”

“It is a good thing you are retired, then.” He heard the pop of a wine cork in the background. He wonders what the vintage is. He doubts the bottle will last the next few hours.

“Goodbye, Hannibal.”

“ *Fino a quando ci incontriamo di nuovo* .”

Allies and Enemies

Chapter Summary

Will meets some people. He isn't too happy about it.

A fucking psychiatrist. Will is honestly surprised he has not caused Hannibal to combust from the strength of his mental ire. Hannibal did not tell him where they were going, just to keep Friday evening open. It wasn't until Will was seated in a chair across from her and Hannibal excused himself that he recognized the familiarity of his and Bedelia's positions.

He hides his seething behind his 'normal person' mask, putting on a rueful smile for Dr. Du Maurier.

"Sorry, I didn't know I would be attending a professional appointment. I'm a bit taken aback." He is fucking furious.

"If it helps, Hannibal is usually the only patient I still see. I retired two years ago." She has a measured, cool tone; professional but distant, without tipping over into clinical. He wonders if that's her natural cadence or if she has trained herself to speak that way.

He can read between the lines of that statement, too. He still avoids eyes, but he has to spend more time looking at faces in this new persona. That's what 'normal' people do after all. Bedelia appears too young to have retired due to age. There is also something in her face that hints at a specific reason for the early withdrawal. Something...tragic maybe. He would be willing to put money down that Hannibal had something to do with it.

"So you are Hannibal's psychiatrist." Will paused. It was slightly out of character, but, "What's *that* like?"

He thinks he sees her suppress a small smirk. "It is generally considered bad form to discuss other patients." She says carefully. Will notices despite her words, she isn't actually refusing to do so. Hannibal wants her opinion on him, he realizes. That's why he brought him here.

"I understand," he tells her demurely. Then with the slightest of edges he adds, "But since your only other patient is my bond mate, would it be alright if I discussed him?"

"Of course." She has her own not-smile. He wonders how long Hannibal has known her, a small burn of possessiveness burns in his chest which he resolutely squashes down.

"Is there anything about your mate in particular that you'd like to share?" she inquires.

He considers her, the edges of his mask fraying infinitesimally. His first instinct is to tell her to fuck off, he doesn't need or want his head shrunk. On the other hand, this is Hannibal's

psychiatrist. He's not foolish enough to believe Hannibal shares all his secrets with her, but maybe she has some insight that he can use. The question is, how much loyalty, or fear, does she have for Hannibal. Could she be a potential ally? He would have to see how much she knows first. And how much she is willing to give away.

He looks through the large windows, noting there is a well tended garden in the yard. He can feel her eyes upon him. "I suppose," he responds slowly, "that recently I have realized that there is a lot I don't know about the man I mated. For instance, I didn't know he saw a psychiatrist." He tips his head toward her.

"It is not something everyone feels comfortable sharing, even with those closest to them. Perhaps bringing you here is a sign of trust.

It's a sign he received Will's message with the suppressants.

"What is that saying, 'marry in haste...?"

"Repent at leisure." She finishes for him.

"Yes. When I agreed to bond with Hannibal, I wasn't completely aware of what I was getting myself into."

She tilts her head slightly. Will sees a slight flicker in her eyes. *She knows about Hannibal.* He thinks. *Maybe not everything. Maybe not even as much as me, but she knows he is not what he appears.*

"And what do you think you have gotten yourself into?" She asks when he doesn't elaborate.

He hesitates. She might see Hannibal, but how much of himself should he let her see? He decides on honesty. "A war."

There is no visible reaction to that, but he can feel a change in the air. He has her riveted attention.

"All's fair." She says. On anyone else it would have come off as flippant.

"So they say." Will leans back in his chair. They study each other openly now, taking measure.

"I believe," she says, staring through him, "that you have something of a natural talent when it comes to...breaching defenses."

Will dips his head in acknowledgement of the warning. "It is always beneficial to have knowledge of one's opponent."

"You are not the only one that thinks so."

"I am well aware." It is why he is here, after all. Hannibal is seeking the opinion of his adviser. He does not know what sort of hold Hannibal has on her, but Will thinks he might

have Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier figured out. He does not have anything to offer for his next request, but he thinks she'll take it anyway.

"Knowledge, depending on the source, can be very...selective." Will says.

Her eyebrow ticks ever so slightly up. "That is true, and interpretations of perceptions can differ greatly."

"Depending on the person you are talking to, as well." Will adds.

She looks away from him, and picks up a glass of wine from the side table. She swirls it gently in the glass, watching the red liquid cling to the sides before pooling again. She takes a sip, then addresses Will, still studying her drink.

"I have found that, in regards to gaining information, a neutral party is the most insightful."

"They certainly are wisest when it comes to self preservation." He says to her. She almost does smile at that.

"It is never a good idea to get into the middle of a battle one has no stake in. Watching from the sidelines...well, it offers a completely different perspective."

"How's the view from over there?"

"It could go either way, I think." She tilts her head in curiosity. "Which, I'll admit, is surprising. But if I were to advise the combatants…" She trails off, Will wants to lean forward, but he keeps his body relaxed.

" Do not fool yourself into thinking he is not in control of what's happening."

Will accepts that, pulling it into himself to absorb and analyze.

"What would you tell the other combatant?"

She looks out the window, and is quiet so long Will thinks she isn't going to answer.

"Who holds the devil, let them hold him well." Her words are barely more than a whisper. She gets up, taking her glass with her and stands before the windows, the sunlight shining through casting her in silhouette.

"Maybe you deserve each other." She says. Will takes that as his cue to leave.

The next day he has lunch with Alana and Beverly. He can relax his mask around them some, which is a relief. Beverly knew him before he started hiding, and Alana is perceptive enough to notice his change in behavior and attitude. Besides, he actually likes both of the women so he doesn't need the fake pleasantries like when he goes out with Hannibal.

After lunch they wander on foot around downtown Baltimore, looking in shop windows. The women keep up a light conversation, unconcerned with Will's silence. They never pressured him when he didn't feel like talking, another reason why he liked them.

“Hey, I’ve heard of this place!” Beverly says. He looks up at a corner shop with a brick facade. The sign in the window proclaims luthier services and music lessons.

“I’ve been meaning to get my violin restrung. Do you guys mind if we step in?” Alana and Will look at each other, shrugging in agreement.

A bell tinkles as they enter. An older man is tuning a cello as they enter. He smiles at them.

“Is there anything I can help you with today?”

“I need to have my violin restrung. I’ve heard good things about this place.”

“We do try, now let me ask…”

Will and Alana left Beverly talking with the proprietor as they wandered around the shop. Will comes upon an upright piano. Unable to resist he taps out a few notes. It had been a long time since he’d played piano. He had a neighbor once who was an instructor and had taught him the basics. He had never been able to practice continually. Sometimes when Hannibal was gone, he’d plink out a tune on the harpsichord, but it was not quite the same.

“Danse Macabre.” A voice says behind him. Will turns, startled. He hadn’t heard anyone approach. A young black man stands behind him. He has to stop his nose automatically wrinkling at the scent of an unfamiliar alpha.

“Please, don’t let me stop you.” He says.

“I don’t really remember the rest. And I probably shouldn’t be messing around anyway.” The other man made Will feel uneasy. He looked perfectly amicably, but there was something...dangerous in his penetrating stare.

“No, no,” he soothes, “instruments are meant to be played. What use are they otherwise?” He smiles at Will. Will forces a responding smile. He hopes his recent practice makes it look at least a little natural.

“Still, I doubt my skill level is worthy of these particular instruments.”

“If that is the case,” the man’s smile grew wider, “Might I offer my services?” He offers a hand. “Tobias Budge, apprentice luthier, and music teacher. I assist the proprietor here.”

Will takes the hand because it would be rude not to. It was cool and dry, with calluses built up on the fingers from years of playing stringed instruments.

“Will Graham. Nice to meet you.”

“I’m certain it is far nicer for me.” Tobias did not let go of his hand. Will blinks. Was this man *flirting* with him? Surely he could smell that Will is already mated.

He extracts his hand as politely as he can. “Well, I don’t know if I have time for music lessons right now.”

“Perhaps in the future. Art is always worth making time for.” The man’s eyes gleamed.

“I-I’ll consider it.” Will says. He glances at Beverly, thankfully, she seemed to be wrapping up her business.

“Please, do. Here.” Tobias hands him an embossed card.

Will takes it, eager to put some distance between himself and this unsettling alpha. “Thank you.”

“I am sure we will meet again, Mr. Graham.” Will gives him a tight, polite smile and regroups with his friends.

Later, he would wonder why the encounter bothered him so much. The man was a little pushy, but that could be written off as the mark of an eager salesperson. It was just the way he looked at Will, like he was prey. No, like he was a prize.

Will throws away the card and tries to put it out of his mind. He had more than enough on his plate dealing with Hannibal without throwing another dangerous alpha into the mix. *Though* , a dark part of him mused, *it would be interesting to see how Hannibal reacted to the other alpha.*

A Show and Dinner

Chapter Summary

Hannibal meets Tobias Budge. He isn't happy about the attention he is paying his mate.

Chapter Notes

Almost done guys. One more chapter from Will's pov and then an epilogue. Thanks to everyone who has been following along on this fic, you guys are what has kept me writing!

They go to the opera. Will smiles and is charming for the society dames, but Hannibal can see the fraying behind his eyes. The charade is starting to wear on the younger man. Hannibal tries to keep from tensing as he waits for the next move. Then he spots a familiar face in the crowd and clenches his teeth.

He drains the glass of wine in his hand. He puts on an appearance of listening to Mrs. Komeda's inane chatter while his every other sense is concentrated on the pair approaching from behind.

"I believe this young man is trying to get your attention."

Ah, yes. He turns toward Franklin, the stink of his inappropriate cologne assaulting his nostrils. Beside him is a young alpha man...who is staring familiarly at Will. Hannibal narrows his eyes.

He lets Franklin dig an awkward hole for himself. The man has no self awareness or social grace. Somewhat desperately he turns to the dark skinned man.

"This is my friend, Tobias."

"I have already made this man's acquaintance. Did you enjoy the performance, Mr. Graham?" Tobias smiles sharklike at Will. Hannibal looks at Will, exerting control over his face so only polite inquiry shows.

"Very moving." Will says, staring down into his glass, studiously avoiding the eyes of both alphas fixated on him.

Franklin stares puzzled from one face to another. "How do you know each other?"

“Mr. Graham came into the string shop one day a little while ago. I was hoping to see you come back and play for us again.”

“What string shop do you work in?” Hannibal asks before Will can respond. Tobias tells him. “I have heard good things about it. I have been meaning to have my harpsichord restrung. I don’t suppose you do house calls?”

Out of the corner of his eye he sees Will shoot him a look, but he keeps his eyes locked on Tobias.

“Of course,” the other man says smoothly. “Just call on the shop to make an appointment.”

“I certainly will. Gentlemen, Ladies.” He nods at the group, and takes Will’s arm, skillfully extracting him from the conversation. Will is silent until they get in the car. He gives Hannibal a shrewd look.

“What are you playing at, Hannibal?”

Hannibal smiles beatifically at his mate. “The same game as you, my dear.”

Will looks impassively out the window as they drive home. In truth, he is not entirely sure how Tobias is going to fit into this battle of wits he is engaged in with Will. But the upstart had the temerity to gaze possessively at his mate. Why hadn’t Will mentioned he had met the man? Surely he recognized the other alpha’s interest. Was it possible he encouraged it?

Hannibal looks at the omega’s solemn profile. No. If anything, the man seems oblivious to his own charms. He would not even think to play upon Hannibal’s jealousy in such a way.

Still. It would be good to have Tobias for dinner.

A week later a man made into a cello is found, and Tobias sends Hannibal a message through Franklin. It seems time to pay a visit to the string shop.

He catches the bell before it can ring and announce his presence. There is the sound of an amatuer violen player. Hannibal stalks silently around the shop, taking in the beautifully crafted instruments.

“Mr. Lecter.” Tobias drawls from the doorway of a back room.

“Dr.” Hannibal corrects.

“Dr., of course, my apologies.” He answers insincerely. “Is Mr. Graham not with you today?”

Hannibal narrows his eyes infinitesimally. “No, my mate is otherwise occupied.”

The two predators size each other up. Tobias is a predator, Hannibal can see that. He is young, vicious, and arrogant. Hannibal may be older, but his experience far outstrips this competitor. If one could even call him that.

“If you have time in your schedule, perhaps you would join us for dinner tomorrow evening? You can have a look at the harpsichord then.”

“With you and ...your mate?” There is a flash in the other alpha’s eyes.

“Yes.”

“It would be my pleasure.”

Hannibal gives a polite nod of farewell, and exits as quietly as he entered. It passed unsaid that he had not given Tobias the address. He was certain the man knew by now.

He does not tell Will, just prepares dinner and place settings for three. He sits at the head of the table, of course. Will on his right, Tobias on his left facing each other. Will raises his eyes when he sees the plates.

“Who are we expecting?” He asks lightly.

“A special guest.”

A small wrinkle creased his forehead, but the younger man answers back lightly.

“Should I change?”

Hannibal studies the form fitting slacks and dark gray shirt tucked into them. He is pleased with Will’s recent clothing choices adopted as part of his new persona. They were still slightly more casual than he himself preferred, but they suited the omega.

“No, you are fine.”

The doorbell chimes as Hannibal drizzles sauce over the plates. Will goes to answer it. Hannibal imagines the gears starting to whir in the man’s mind when he discovers who is dining with them.

He hears muted conversation move into the dining room, and picks up the plates, placing two on one arm with ease of practice.

“Ah, Mr. Budge. So good of you to join us.” Hannibal says, deftly placing the food. He picked up a bottle of wine that had been chilling in a bucket on the table. He applies a corkscrew.

Will’s eyes impassively watch him manipulate the implement.

“Thank you for inviting me.” Tobias smiles at Will. “I am eager to see to this instrument of yours.”

“Ah, but first, dinner.”

“Hannibal is very particular about food.” Will says, not quite looking at Tobias. It seemed to Hannibal that the omega’s mask was slipping. He could see the tension in his face. A tension

that rises as the meal began.

“Franklin speaks quite a bit about you, Dr. Lecter.” Tobias takes a sip of his wine.

“He has been a very...dedicated patient.”

“He is a very loyal friend. I find it useful. Which is why when he began mentioning you so earnestly, I felt it necessary to investigate a bit.”

“It does you credit that you look after your friend.” Hannibal says without a trace of irony. Will’s lips flatten into a thin line for a moment.

“I followed you one night.” Tobias says to Hannibal, but his eyes are on Will. “Out of town, out of state. To a lonely road.”

Will’s knife and fork pause. Then he deliberately takes a bite, eyes downcast. Hannibal watches him, fascinated as he answers.

“You are reckless, Tobias.”

“I’m not going to tell anyone what I saw you do and do well.”

“No?” The two sets of eyes follow Will’s hands as he sets down his knife and fork and picks up his wine glass. He sits back and takes a sip, finally looking at the two other men. His gaze flicks back and forth between them.

“Don’t mind me.” He says flippantly when neither speaks.”Please, continue your conversation. I want to know what happens next.”

The two alphas look at each other. “I was going to kill you.” Tobias continues.

“What stopped you from wanting to? Or have you stopped?”

“I wanted clarification on a few points.” His gaze is drawn inevitably back to Will who stares back with a mask of polite attentiveness. “I could use a...friend. Someone who can understand me. Who thinks like I do, and can see the world and the people in it the way I do.”

“A friend.” Hannibal states flatly.

“A companion.”

“I know exactly how you feel. Unfortunately, you will not get the chance to gain such a partner.” Hannibal stands up. Tobias follows suit, then hesitates, and glances down at his half eaten meal.

Hannibal smiles with genuine mirth. “I didn’t poison you, Tobias. I wouldn’t do that to the food.”

The alphas break their stare off when Will sets his glass down heavily. There is a faraway look on his face , the dawning light of awareness. He stands up suddenly and disappears into the kitchen.

The two men in the dining room watch his retreating back. Hannibal feels off balance. They listen intently to the sound of doors opening and footsteps rapidly moving around the house. Will enters from the other end of the dining room. He is carrying two small items in his hands. He pauses at the end of the table, then walks slowly until he is between the two men. He sets the items down on the table with a thump.

Hannibal looks down. It is his recipe box and wheeladex. Slowly, his eyes meet his mate's. There is crystal certainty in them.

"What-" Tobias does not get to finish his question. Will whirls around. There is a flash of a blade, and the musician is falling forward, throat open. In Will's hand is the antler handled knife Hannibal had bought him after their first date.

Beginning

Chapter Summary

They finally have it out.

Chapter Notes

Thank you guys so much for following this story! There is still going to be a short epilogue, but for the most part this story is finished. I hope you enjoyed it!

The two men watch the blood spread over the white tablecloth. Gravity acts on the slumped body and it slides from it's tenuous position on the table onto the floor with a heavy slap. There is some twitching of muscle and a horrendous smell as what had once been a person is rendered into so much meat.

Quite literally thinks Will sourly, turning to Hannibal who gazes at him in almost reverent admiration.

"I killed a man the night we met." Will says before his brain catches up with his mouth.

" All of our endings can be found in our beginnings. History repeats itself, and there is no escape."

"Is this a ending?" Will wonders aloud.

"That, " Hannibal says carefully, "is up to you I think."

"Oh, I have a choice?"

"You are the one holding the knife."

Will snorts and sets the knife down next to the damning box and business card holder. "And I'm suppose to believe you couldn't overpower me."

"Not easily, I think. Not without hurting you."

Will's eyes shine with icy fury. "Now you care about not hurting me?"

Hannibal hesitates. "I am sorry, Will."

Will grabs Hannibal's lapels, The hand that had held the knife is slick with blood. He pulls his face close to Hannibal's. "And that's suppose to make everything better, is it? I'll just forgive and forget, and we go on our merry way."

"Forgive. I hope someday. But I do not expect you to forget."

"You eat people! You fed them to me!"

"That is not why you are upset."

"Oh, I'm pretty angry about a lot of things." Will can feel the bottled up fury of weeks, months boiling inside of him, starting to spill over.

"Will." Hannibal's hands cup his face. Will has to close his eyes against the red haze that fills his vision.

"Who are you?" The question comes out in a hoarse whisper, if it didn't he would have been screaming.

"You know."

His eyes flash open again. "No more games, Hannibal! Tell me!"

"Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Your mate. That is who I am, Will. Whatever I have been called by the police and media, that is what the truth is. You have seen the whole of me."

"Why me?"

"You can't control with respect to whom you fall in love." Hannibal says.

Will goes very still, the sound of his own heartbeat (was that just his?) in his ears. "You're in love with me?"

" Two souls, alas, are dwelling in my breast. And each will wrestle for the mastery there."

Will presses his forehead against Hannibal's chest. He begins to tremble, then shake violently. He realizes he is laughing. Tears stream down his face. A hand tentatively touches his hair. He turns his head, looking at the thing that had been Tobias Budge.

"Dr. Du Maurier was right." He says. "We do deserve each other." He raises up, grabs Hannibal by the back of the head and sinks his teeth into the side of his neck. He feels the skin give way, a hot copper taste on his tongue.

Hannibal's hands grip his waist tightly, his body otherwise completely still. Will holds there for a small eternity that truly only lasted a few seconds. He unclamps his jaw and draws back, licking the salty taste from his lips, and surveys the perfect bite mark framing Hannibal's jugular. It was a livid partner to the one faded to a white scar on his own neck.

Hannibal's eyes flare wild and hot. He pulls Will to him roughly, mouth devouring his, licking inside to taste his own blood. Will kisses back, still filled with sound and fury seeking

an outlet.

He hitches a leg over Hannibal's hip. His other thigh is grabbed and hoisted up, and he finds himself clinging to the alpha who holds his weight easily. He steps over Tobias's body to the empty side of the dining table. He leans over until Will's back touches the surface. Hannibal is between Wil's thighs, hands roaming under his shirt. Will pulls it off and Hannibal's teeth find a nipple and bite. Will makes a feral noise, pulling at his mate's hair. The alpha rears back, stripping his own clothes off. Will unbuckles his belt. His pants and underwear get caught and his shoes and he awkwardly kicks them off.

Hannibal looms back over him, but Will pushes hard to the side. Unbalanced, Hannibal rolls onto his back on the table. Will straddles him, grinning roguishly. He grabs Hannibal's cock, squeezing it cruelly, pulling upward. Hannibal rumbles in his chest. Will snarls back in response.

He inches forward on his knees, loving the feel of the powerful alpha beneath him at his mercy. He positions the stiff organ at his hole and bears down. His slick barely eases the burning stretch as he takes him, but he savors the sensation. Hannibal tries to hold his waist, and Will slaps his hands away. Bracing his hands on his mates shoulders, he begins to ride. He is hesitant at first, finding a rhythm, but soon he is rising and falling hard. Head thrown back, he uses the alpha for his own pleasure.

He presses a hand to Hannibal's throat, watching the blood ooze from the fresh bite mark. His insides clench tightly, causing Hannibal to groan and buck upward. Will feels his orgasm rising. His movements become frantic as he chases it. Finally, he crests, whole body tensing like a taut bowstring. Mouth open in a silent scream as it wracks him. Hannibal grips his hips, fingers going white, and pulls him sharply down. His knot stretches him even further. He does cry out now, a wild animal sound. He is stuffed full.

When the swelled knot goes down, he pulls off and clambers off the table. He stands there, hands on hips, naked, bodily fluids beginning to run down his leg. The wild anger he had carried for months is mostly gone, though there are still some embers smoldering in the depths of his mind. For the most part he feels...powerful.

He surveys Hannibal who, for the first time Will has ever seen, looks completely wrecked. The shine in his eyes as he gazes up at Will is awestruck. Will stares coolly back.

"No more, Hannibal." He says. The alpha's face falls blank.

"No more games. No more winding me up and watching me go. No more treating me like a possession. No more forced social gatherings. No more *rape* ." He spits the last word out. "Even if I am in heat."

He eyes the alpha who is silent for a long time, seemingly lost in his own mind.

"And what do you intend to do about the Chesapeake Ripper?" He finally asks.

Will purses his lips and looks down. "No more games." He repeats then looks Hannibal directly in the eye. "Unless we are on the same side."

Hannibal's expression does not change, but Will fancies that his eyes grow brighter. He feels something warm blossom in his chest, and he realizes that it is not coming from him. He is feeling, for the first time an emotion through the bond from Hannibal. It grows brighter and hotter until there is a wildfire flaring inside him.

"Mylimasis." Hannibal stands, and cradles Will gently against his chest, his gentle touch a stark contrast to the feelings Will knows are burning within him.
Will rests against him, eyes closing.

They stand there together, above the cooling body, food congealing on the table. Will whispers, voice barely audible. "By Fortune's adverse buffets overborne. To solitude I fled, to wilds forlorn. And not in utter loneliness to live, Myself at last did to the Devil give."

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Several years later...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack Crawford leans back in his desk chair and addresses the two trainee agents in front of him.

“You two are the top of your class at the academy and have both shown interest in joining the BAU once you graduate.” Miriam Lass sits up a bit straighter, keenness shining on her face. Will Graham is a bit harder to read, but appears to be listening very closely.

“I’ve brought you in because you both have shown promise at profiling along with a tendency to think outside the box. I’d like to get your opinions on some of our ongoing investigations.” He looks at them sternly. “This is strictly extra curricular and you should not let it affect your studies and training, understood?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Of course, sir.”

He nods in approval. “But if you do well, there might just be a place for you here once you graduate.”

They don’t disappoint, and they work well together, which is a relief. Jack was worried that Lass’s obvious ambition may lead to her attempting to undermine potential challengers. But their personalities and abilities meshed well. Graham was quiet and polite where she was brash and unafraid to speak her mind. Graham showed a natural talent for picking up on subtle evidence and making intuitive leaps, whereas she analyzed information and saw patterns where no one else did. Together they made an impressive team. A profile they worked on together led to a breakthrough on the Angel Maker case, and Jack decides it’s time to let them play in the big leagues.

He gives them access to the Chesapeake Ripper files. It had been over a year since the last cycle, but Jack knew better than to think the bastard had stopped for good. He watches the faces of the trainees as they go over the crime scene photos. Will pauses for a long time on what the media had dubbed the Christmas Massacre, though Jack doesn’t think three bodies can be called a massacre. There is still considerable debate over whether it was committed by the Ripper or not, but Jack feels deep in his gut that it was.

“What do you see?” Jack asks him.

“It seems the Ripper was inspired by the tale of Faust.” Will replies, tearing his eyes away.

“Inspired?” An odd choice of words.

The young man’s expression takes on a faraway look. “He thinks of himself as an artist, elevating the base into something...more worthy. I think there is some element of irony known only to him in all of the murders. Perhaps something to do with why he chose them?”

“The victims don’t have any apparent connection.” Miriam says, brow furrowed. Will shrugs.

“He obviously sees one.”

“An interesting theory, Trainee. Lass?”

“Probably an unmated, white, alpha, male between the ages of 35 and 65 going by statistics. He’s very strong to be able to move the bodies. Surgical background judging by the expertise of the incisions. Many of the bodies are found in poses resembling or in reference to famous works, so I can see Will’s point about art. He seems to be well educated.” She looks down at the gruesome spread of photographs. “I think,” she says slowing down from the fast clip she had rattled off the rest of the profile in, “there is something *exotic* about him. He hides by standing out.”

That was more the kind of leap that Graham would make. They both look at her in surprise. She pinkins. “Just a feeling.” She mutters.

“Listen to your gut, Lass. Sometimes it can be a better judge than your brain.”

A few weeks later Miriam comes to him with the idea of investigating all the medical personnel seen by the latest victim. Jack very pointedly lets her know that if she chooses to do that in her own time, (and certainly not on any official orders) she should take Will with her just in case.

He smiles to himself as she leaves, eager to get started. He has high hopes for these two recruits.

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Miriam reads off the next address on the list. It had been a long fruitless day. Her initial excitement at being given the go ahead to go out and do some real investigating had long since worn off. Now she was looking forward to going home and putting her feet up. But they had time to check out one more on the list today.

Will glances over at her, before putting the car and gear and driving. She didn’t really know him outside of classes and work. He hung out with Beverly Katz who was training for

forensics, she knew. But he didn't talk much about himself, keeping focused on work, which she appreciated. Still, though, probably couldn't hurt to spend some time together outside the FBI. Especially if they both wound up working in the BAU; it would be nice to have a friend.

They pull up outside a fancy building on the richer side of Baltimore. She leads the way up the path and into the tastefully decorated waiting room. It's empty. Not even a secretary, which is a bit surprising. She hesitates, a bit unsure how to proceed. Will goes over and knocks sharply on the door, which she assumes must lead into the office.

She stares at him in surprise. He had let her take point on their questioning all day, in general hanging back and chiming in only when needed. Now was an odd time for him to start getting assertive. The door opens to reveal an elegant man in a plaid three piece suit. What should have looked ridiculous, he somehow managed to pull off like it was the height of fashion. Before she can say anything Will speaks.

"Sir, you are under arrest for the crimes of the notorious serial killer, the Chesapeake Ripper."

Miriam stares at him in open mouthed horror. What was he *doing* ?

The man seems amused. "It seems that you have caught me, agent. Do you expect me to come quietly?"

"I hope not." To her further surprise, Will grins wolfishly. He steps up to the man and gives him a brief, but embarrassingly thorough kiss.

"I think you have shocked your guest, my dear." The man says once they had separated faces. She abruptly realizes her mouth is still hanging open. She shuts it with a snap.

Will chuckles. "Sorry, Miriam. When I heard the address I decided to play a little joke. This is my mate, Dr. Hannibal Lecter."

Dr. Lecter steps forward smoothly, holding out a hand. "A pleasure to meet you Agent Lass. I have heard much about you."

She takes the hand, regaining her senses. "Thank you. And it's not agent yet. I'm just a trainee."

"Never just a trainee." He smiles warmly. "What brings you two by?"

"We are investigating medical personnel who treated a man named James Roberts. He came into the emergency room while you were on duty several years ago. He had been in a car accident. I don't suppose you remember him?"

"Not that I can recall. I treated many people while I worked as a surgeon. But I keep rather thorough journals. I could look if you like?"

"If you don't mind."

"Not at all. Always happy to help the FBI. Please, come in."

He goes up to the small library on the balcony. While Will and Miriam wait at the lavish room below.

“I hope you aren’t upset.” Will says looking rueful.

“No, it’s okay, I was just surprised. I didn’t know you had a mate.” As a beta she wasn’t privy to the complex scent markings that make up alpha and omega social dynamics.

“I kept my last name. I try to keep my bond status on the down low at work. Hannibal’s rather well known in certain circles, and I don’t want anyone saying I didn’t get by on my own merits. If you get my drift.”

She looks around the office, silently tallying the cost of the furniture and fixtures. Her mental calculator cashed out.

“Yes. I think I understand.”

She wanders around for lack of anything to say. She approaches a drawing desk. There is a half finished sketch on it.

“Oh!” She says, turning away quickly, face flushing hotly. Will comes over.

“Dammit, Hannibal.” He groans. The picture is obviously of Will, sprawled bare and seductive on a lounge. The psychiatrist descends carrying a thick journal under one arm.

“I thought I asked you to stop drawing me naked at your office!” Will says, annoyed.

“Ah, but you make such a charming *Odalisque,”* Hannibal says unashamedly. He winks at Miriam. “I’m afraid my mate can be a bit of a prude.”

“I’m not a prude.” Will grumps, but is obviously not too upset.

“I have found my journal from that time. I’ll go through it tonight and have Will report anything I find tomorrow, shall I?”

“Sounds good. Thank you.” Miriam says.

“And you must come by the house sometime, Ms. Lass.” Hannibal smiles, showing surprisingly sharp teeth.

“Yes, Miriam.” Will agrees. “We would love to have you for dinner.”

Chapter End Notes

And so it ends. Thank you all so much for reading! This is the longest thing I have ever written. I have a really bad habit of starting stuff and never finishing so it is a huge accomplishment for me to get to the end of this story. If you like my writing, I have

another Hannigram A/B/O story that is in progress titled Matched that I will be posting the first chapter of soon. Thanks again everyone! Stay awesome :)

End Notes

In my A/B/O omegas pretty much have the same status as women in modern US society. As in slightly oppressed but a lot better than fifty years ago.
Heats happen on a three month basis and typically last about three days. While heats are extremely uncomfortable without a partner and the pheromones produced will induce a rut in alphas, heats do not cause either party to lose their minds with lust, though they will compromise the participants' judgement.
Courting is a slightly old fashioned, but still respectable practice and usually follows a strict pattern in regards to alpha/omega relationships. I'm borrowing the courting steps from emptycel's very excellent JohnLock fic "The Six Steps of Courtship".

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!